

## **Portland Library Report for Fiscal Mid-Year 2009-2010 July – December 2009**

### **The Library is a community center and contributes actively to the community, both inside and outside its doors.**

An increasing number of students visit the library during the afternoons, elders and busy parents drop by at all hours and the preschool set finds a welcoming environment in which to learn to socialize, and love books. More than 6,000 library visits took place during January alone, despite the winter weather. Computer use has increased, possibly due to the growing number of job seekers and residents using free internet services, as they are striving to conserve dollars during tough times.

The number of Portland residents holding active library cards at this writing is 4,328.

Community collaborations and services include the following:

- Eleven carts of food were delivered to Portland's Food Bank during the "Food for Fines" holiday program.
- The Library participated in Youth Services' Family day and provided programs and visits to Park and Recreation groups.
- The Library participates in Portland Library Council that meets with the school media specialists to find ways to provide the best service to Portland students.
- Second grade class visits introduced Portland's school children to the Library.
- The Library supports the Portland Early Childhood Council.
- A fall program for small business owners was well attended, and ongoing meetings of small business groups continue to take place at the library.
- The library held 127 programs for various ages; over 2,100 attended.
- The meeting rooms used by groups and individuals were used 428 times, with attendance of 7,262.

### **Youth Services**

Preschool story times sessions are offered seasonally. Monthly events for beginning readers took place through February, as did meetings of the Teen Advisory Board. A reading program geared to intermediate grade students was held. Performances and events were offered during vacation and holiday periods; these were supported generously by the Friends of the Portland Library.

Due to an ongoing vacancy in the position of Youth Services Librarian, the sessions for preschool programs were shortened during the fall and winter and no regular evening programs were offered for children. Patrons have expressed their wishes to have more programs for the children, including evening and Saturday programs.

## **Portland Library Report for Fiscal Mid-Year 2009-2010 July – December 2009**

During the fall, the Library's Teen Advisory Board received a *Healthy Youth, Healthy Community* mini grant from Portland's Youth Services and the United Way. This allowed for book related programming that was planned by the Teens themselves.

### **Programming**

A Summer Reading Program was based upon the "Be Creative" theme and was enjoyed by all ages. In cooperation with the Park & Recreation Department and the Portland Housing Authority, and supported in part by a grant from the Reva Paley Youth Book Fund, young residents of Chatham Court came to the library to attend programs and to sign up for library cards. Programs continued to be offered throughout the year.

### **Planning**

The Board finalized a Five Year Plan based on surveys conducted last spring to ensure the Library continues to be responsive to community needs.

### **Collection**

In 2009, due to a freeze on spending, more than \$15,000 that was originally budgeted was not expended for books. This year's operating book budget was considerably lower than the previous year's original amount, by \$31,125, or 66 per cent.

Therefore, we have fallen behind in our ability to offer the variety and number of items as in past years and the Library is beginning to see a trend downward in book borrowing. The Friends of the Portland Library provided for purchasing a limited amount of specific categories of books. This unusual support of book purchasing is outside of the Friends' usual activity that supplements the basic library services. Therefore, support of an increase in the operating budget for the coming fiscal year is critical.

An online Audio book service providing downloads to computers and MP3 has been funded by annual State funds. The checkouts of these digital audio books have doubled during the first half of this fiscal year. The media collection is currently solely supported by the Friends group and other donors; it provides music, entertainment, cultural enrichment and instructional DVDs, as well as books on compact disc.

### **Information Services**

Questions asked of the Information staff increased by 10 percent during the first half of this fiscal year. Library card signups and use of museum passes also increased notably. The demand for computer use and requests for assistance with the computers increased, especially use of the word processing (up by 60%) and Internet signups (up by 19.5%).

### **Income**

Fines and fees returned more than \$3,500 through December.

**Portland Library Report for Fiscal Mid-Year 2009-2010  
July – December 2009**

**On the horizon**

The Library is currently planning a summer reading program for all ages; the program is supported by the Friends group and has the water theme “Make a Splash”. The kick off will be an exciting musical performance geared to the young, featuring electronic violinist Caryn Lin performing at the Brownstone Intermediate School on June 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.

Portland is a participant in The Big Read, a joint grant program of the National Endowment of the Arts and the IMLS, to bring reading to the center of community life. Events will take place from April through June, based upon the book *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. A community picnic is being planned for June 19<sup>th</sup>, by the river front.

The Library and Friends of the Portland Library are investigating improvements in technology infrastructure, including increased Internet access, per the Board of Library Directors’ Five Year Plan.

The Town is a recipient of stimulus funds that are earmarked to provide for an upgrade to the library’s climate control system. The project will provide, at no cost to the local taxpayer, better energy conservation and lower operating costs.

Respectfully submitted,  
Janet Nocek, Library Director