



NATIONAL EXECUTIVE SERVICE CORPS
FINAL REPORT
FOR
BLOOMINGDALE FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY



Strategic Plan
May, 2009

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BACKGROUND

The Highlands Regional Library Cooperative (HRLC) was established in 1994 and serves nearly one thousand members who represent academic, public school and allied support organizations in a seven-county area in northern New Jersey. The Cooperative promotes full and equal access to resources for the residents of Bergen, Hunterdon, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex and Warren Counties by envisioning, developing and supporting cooperative activities, programs and services for and among member libraries.

To help fulfill this mission by partnering with member libraries, Highlands believes an organizational development process based on strategic planning will help educate local library trustees in their responsibilities. Its thinking is based on positive results from a Strategic Planning Retreat conducted with the Glen Rock Public Library in 2008.

HRLC began this process by selecting three libraries in its area of responsibility to work with NESC and who share a portion of the cost. The libraries selected were: Roxbury, Rutherford and Bloomingdale.

The Bloomingdale Free Public Library (“the Library”) circulates approximately 43,000 items per year. The Library serves a population of 7,604, its annual budget is approximately \$338,000 and its collection contains approximately 33,000 volumes.

THE ASSIGNMENT

With the above background in mind, NESC worked with the Bloomingdale Free Public Library to help prepare a strategic plan that would enhance its effectiveness and improve funding capability. This included:

- ◆ Reviewing the Mission Statement
- ◆ Assessing the outside environment
- ◆ Assessing strengths and limitations of Bloomingdale Free Public Library
- ◆ Developing a vision for the Library for 2012
- ◆ Guiding the organization in preparing action steps to achieve the vision

To accomplish the above, the NESC consultants had an initial meeting with Library staff members, Board members and members of the community to become familiar with these issues. This was followed by a full-day retreat attended by the same participants. The NESC consultants worked with the Library staff and Board to draft the final strategic plan. Six months after the plan is completed, the NESC consultants will return to the Bloomingdale Free Public Library to review its progress.

Participants in the Strategic Plan were:

◆ **Members of the Board of Trustees**

- Edward Simoni, Steven Pellegrino, Darlene Nowak, Dennis DiLorenzo, David Kingsley, Robert Bloodgood, Louis Lombardi, Philip Lynch

◆ **Library Staff**

- Patricia Perugino, Denise Carrozza, Marie Tripaldi

◆ **Members of the Community**

- Beth Tracey, Meg Gray

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Bloomingdale Free Public Library is to provide a well-rounded collection with access to resources and those services that contribute to the information, cultural, entertainment and recreational needs of all members of this community.

TRENDS IN THE OUTSIDE ENVIRONMENT

There are several trends in the outside environment that the Library needs to consider as it plans for the future. These trends warrant careful and continuous evaluation.

1. Changes in population

- ◆ Anecdotally, the Bloomingdale community has experienced an increase in population diversity, with Eastern European and Hispanic families moving into the town. It is expected that the 2010 census will reflect these changes.
- ◆ The population is not growing, but the median age is.

	1990	2000	Over/ (Under)
Median Age	33.5	37.9	4.4
% under 18	19.7	22.3	2.6
% over 65	9.4	11.9	2.5
Population	7530	7610	80
% White	98	96	(2.0)
% Asian	1	2	1
% Other	1	2	1
% Grad HS or higher	82.6	87.6	5.0
% Bachelor's degree or higher	23.2	25.7	2.5

Source: *New Jersey Municipal Data Book 2008 (Information Publications) for 2000 statistics; 1990 Census (US Dept of Commerce) for 1990*

Implication: The Library should take these population changes into account when developing products and services.

2. Changes in the delivery of education

The way education is delivered has been changing; in particular, there has been growth in on-line courses, virtual schools and home schooling, increasing students' use of public libraries.

Implication: The Library may want to find ways to promote its services to this population.

3. Economic circumstances

Economics plays several roles. First, the biggest funding source for the Library is the municipal budget, which is under significant pressure. Second, fundraising activities become more challenging. On a positive note, the economic downturn results in an increase in the Library's popularity (borrowing books and DVDs).

Implication: The downturn provides an opportunity to publicize Library services to the Bloomingdale community.

4. Environmental awareness

"Going Green" is a strong, emerging trend. Individuals, communities and institutions are becoming more aware of the environmental concerns and are looking for appropriate behaviors and actions to address them. In order to reduce the "carbon footprint," many libraries have taken steps toward energy conservation by increased recycling and reusing, and also by adapting their building. Borrowing library materials is a great way to "reuse" items.

Implication: This trend provides an opportunity for the Library to be a leader in the community; e.g., by role modeling the use of recycled materials; keeping current on environmental information and data; emphasizing the positive impact of "reusing" (borrowing) materials, including pertinent and latest environmental information in library publications; having "green" workshops; ensuring the facility is "green," etc.

5. Changes in technology

Increasingly, technology changes will impact how information is gathered and dispersed. Internet usage continues to grow and new hand-held technologies (e.g., *Kindle*) may lead to more changes. Libraries will continue to provide printed materials and computer-based facilities for new media, plus they will need to accommodate new developments -- for example, users accessing research materials from home. One additional element of complexity is the "age gap." The skill sets of younger and older patrons may lead to differing expectations and preferences.

Implication: Technology changes challenge the Library staff to stay current in how technology impacts the content of the collection, programs offered, and storage and distribution of information. It also requires a plan to determine allocation of funds between printed and electronic media and between educational and recreation media.

COMPETITION

Rental services such as *Blockbuster*, *Netflix* or *Bookswim* allow readers to order books and movies on-line for a fee.

Commercial book sellers such as Amazon, Barnes & Noble and Half.com offer books for sale and book recommendations. There are also local and chain retail book stores that have coffee lounges, story programs and author book signings.

Other sources. Patrons also have access to several other institutions which provide similar services. These include: other local libraries, school libraries, community colleges and private collections.

Other activities. Bloomingdale has such an active citizenry that programs organized by schools, after-care groups, Recreation Department, churches and senior centers all compete for the potential patron's time.

Cultures not familiar with library services. Some of the demographic changes involve people who are not familiar with library services. Also, younger generations accustomed to using the Internet to conduct research may not be familiar with the services the Library offers

STRENGTHS OF THE PRESENT ORGANIZATION

Staff. The staff at Bloomingdale Library is a key strength. They are dedicated professionals, having both knowledge and extensive experience. They are especially resilient and creative, and therefore have the ability to take marginal resources and maximize returns.

Fiscal responsibility. The staff and Board continue to monitor expenses and revenues to ensure that they are being fiscally responsible when making operating and investment decisions.

Proactive Board. The Board members are engaged and set short- and long-term strategies. They are effective in allocating tasks and responsibilities among the members to ensure that those strategies are executed.

Networking. The staff and Board members continue to network with NJLA and regional workshops to increase knowledge and presence of the Library and to look for opportunities.

Reputation. The Library is well regarded in the community and is considered an important asset.

Location. The location of the Library is convenient and easily accessible to the community citizens.

Maximizing facility utilization. The staff has been very creative in maximizing the size of the collection in relation to the Library's physical size.

Children's programs. The Library is known for the uniqueness and quality of the children's programs. Participation is high.

Relationships with schools. The staff has created excellent, supportive working relationships with the local schools.

LIMITATIONS OF THE PRESENT ORGANIZATION

Physical size. While the staff has been very creative in utilizing the square footage, the physical size of the Library is one of the primary limitations. It impacts, for example, the size of the collections, and the ability to have work stations and areas for meetings, discussion groups, etc.

Awareness of location. While the location of the building is convenient, there is a need to increase the awareness of the Library and the location.

Financial resources continue to be a challenge. Specifically, there is a movement at the State level to reduce public funding and a municipal push to explore sharing services. The amount of funding impacts the size of the Library and staff and thus impacts the number of programs, the size of the computer area, the ability to have guest space or refreshments, and the size of the collection.

Volunteers. While the volunteers are very dedicated when working with the Library, the turnover rate is too high and the number of volunteers needs to be increased.

Community size. Bloomingdale's population has been somewhat static. Its economy and demographics are divided -- factors that impact growth and funding for the Library.

Friends. The engagement of the Friends of the Library needs to increase. It is important that they create and implement strategies and programs to increase public awareness and funding.

Borough and political support. At times the support from the Borough has been inconsistent. Its sponsorship and support are important to the Library's short- and long-term sustainability.

VISION OF THE ORGANIZATION IN THREE YEARS' TIME

Reminder: This is written from the perspective of three years from now

1. Clients

The Library thinks very carefully about the clients that it wants to serve. As a result, it has chosen several new groups that it believes will benefit from additional attention. Its priorities are:

- ◆ Enhanced new focus on Pre-K to 8th grade
- ◆ New residents
- ◆ Minority groups
- ◆ Senior citizens
- ◆ Disabled citizens
- ◆ Parents of private school students
- ◆ Newborns

2. Programs/services

The Library has developed and introduced new programs to support these groups.

- a. "Baby Einstein," for newborns. Lap-sit.
- b. The Pre-K to 8th grade program is enhanced and now includes a lap-sit program, a book club for 6th graders and up, a summer reading and movie discussion program and game nights.
- c. For the town's ESL school-age children, "Bilingual Buddies," will offer "reading together" opportunities in the Library. Local elementary school teachers will volunteer their time on a weekly basis. The Library now circulates two Spanish periodicals as well as bilingual juvenile books
- d. In order to attract new town residents, the Library works with the local realtors and it now provides a welcome package.
- e. A computer-on-wheels was purchased and a home-delivery service is available for the disabled and the homebound.
- f. The Library extends its reach to daycare centers and to parents of private school children.

3. Facilities

The following improvements to the facility are in place:

- ◆ New paint
- ◆ New lighting
- ◆ Coat rack
- ◆ Children’s rug and furniture

In addition, the Library is “greener.” New energy conservation and recycling processes are in place.

The Library is “sharing services” and working collaboratively with:

- ◆ Martha B. Day School
- ◆ Bloomingdale Recreation
- ◆ Council Chambers
- ◆ Walter T. Bergen School Library
- ◆ Bloomingdale Senior Center
- ◆ Bloomingdale Fireman’s Hall
- ◆ Day Care Centers
- ◆ Sloan Park

4. Marketing Strategy

A marketing strategy is in place which clearly communicates to patrons and non-users the services and value the Library offers to the community. As part of this strategy, the Library has a newsletter and a logo and tag line, and for special events it uses a banner for Main Street.

5. Development Strategy

A comprehensive development strategy is in place. It aligns the activities of the Friends, Board and Staff. It includes a variety of ways to support the Library and recognition of key sponsors.

6. Staffing

The increased FTE Library staff is current on necessary competencies, especially IT skills. A robust volunteer program is in place.

Per week	2009	2012
Part-time staff hours	133	
Full-time staff hours	35	
FTE	4.67	5.67
Volunteer hours	8	35

7. Board

The Board committees are active. They have well-defined responsibilities, goals, plans and measures to monitor results.

8. Friends of the Library

The Friends are proactive with a clearly defined role and have fundraising and PR goals.

**ACTION STEPS REQUIRED
TO ACHIEVE VISION**

Item	Responsibility	Timing
<i>Newborn/Lap-Sit</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Proposal ◆ Implementation 	Denise	2 nd quarter 2009 3 rd quarter 2009
<i>Pre-K</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Develop resources ◆ Facility ◆ Description 	Denise, Dennis	3 rd quarter 2009
<i>6th-8th grade enhanced programming</i>	Denise, Dennis	2 nd quarter 2010
<i>Bilingual Buddies -- will support English as a second language practice</i>	Meg, Patti	2 nd quarter 2010
<i>Seniors</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Develop programs ◆ Develop proposal 	Margie, David, Bob	2 nd quarter 2009
<i>Residents</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Realtor welcome program ◆ Outreach to daycare ◆ Outreach to private school parents ◆ Proposal 	Marie, Phil	3 rd quarter 2009
Marketing Strategy	Darlene, Lou	1 st quarter 2010
Development Strategy	Steve, Ed, Bob	2 nd quarter 2009
Facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Improvements ◆ Environmental awareness/recycling ◆ Collaboration 	Marie, Ed, Steve	3 rd quarter 2010
Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Computer-on-wheels ◆ Staff training ◆ Budget allocation strategy ◆ Other? 	Darlene	2 nd quarter 2010
Volunteer program	Darlene	4 th quarter 2009

Other programs to consider in the future
Promote services to online/distance learners
Promote services to home-schooled students

APPENDICES

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE SERVICE CORPS

Who We Are

Founded in 1977, the National Executive Service Corps is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that provides management consulting and business advisory services to the nonprofit and public sectors. NESC's mission is to make a meaningful contribution to our communities by strengthening the management of America's nonprofit organizations, schools and government agencies through quality, affordable consulting services which are donated by senior-level business people and professionals. Serving the five boroughs of New York City; Nassau, Suffolk, and Rockland/Westchester Counties; Central and Southwestern Connecticut; and New Jersey, NESC belongs to a national network of more than 30 independent Executive Service Corps affiliates across the country.

What We Do

NESC performs consulting and technical services in assisting organizations in the fields of arts and culture, health and human services, public and private education, religion and government. In addition to enhancing an organization's management effectiveness, NESC helps improve self-reliance and accountability, with the goal of increased productivity and resource utilization. The objective of each engagement is sharply defined and tailored to the specific needs of the client. NESC provides a wide range of management consulting and assistance including:

- ◆ Strategic and Business Planning
- ◆ Organizational Analysis
- ◆ Human Resources
- ◆ Board Development
- ◆ Financial Management Planning and Services
- ◆ Branding
- ◆ Marketing Plans
- ◆ Public Relations and Communications
- ◆ Fundraising Strategies
- ◆ Social Enterprise Strategies
- ◆ Risk Assessment
- ◆ Facilities Planning and Management
- ◆ Information Technology
- ◆ Executive Coaching and Mentoring
- ◆ Retreat Facilitation
- ◆ Executive Search and Recruiting
- ◆ Leadership Training and Development

NESC is supported by philanthropic contributions and modest fees for service. All clients are asked to have a shared stake in the consulting process to assure their commitment to results.

Please visit our website at www.nesc.org

CONSULTANTS' BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Consultants

Cynthia Stites: Virtually all of Cynthia Stites' business career was with Best Foods, where she held the title of Vice President, Marketing and Sales Services. An independent consultant as well as a member of the NESC team, her consulting practice has served St. Paul's CDC, AFS International and Dickinson College. Cynthia holds a BA in Language from Dickinson College, an MBA from University of Virginia and an MS in Creativity and Change Management from Buffalo State University.

Ellen (Randy) Williams: Randy is currently a Managing Director of Redmond, Williams & Associates, LLC, a firm that assists clients in the corporate, nonprofit, academic and governmental sectors to develop effective risk mitigation, ethics and change programs. The greater part of Randy Williams' business career was with American Express, where she held positions of Senior Vice President-Human Resources, Senior Vice President-Operations and, most recently, Corporate Ombudsman. She holds a BA degree in Economics/Math from Randolph-Macon Woman's College

Director of Management Consulting

Robert F. Ehinger: Bob had a business career with Western Electric Co. and AT&T, and was a Public Relations Vice President at both companies. He also had extensive responsibilities in purchasing, human resources administration and general management.