

# Grand Rapids Area Library Strategic Plan 2014-2017

The Grand Rapids Area Library completed a comprehensive strategic planning process between January and March of 2014. Composition of the Planning Team included representatives from the Library Board, Friends of the Grand Rapids Area Library, the Library Program Committee and Library staff.

A community-based process was utilized, which centered on answering two questions:

- 1) *What are the pressing needs in our community?* and,
- 2) *What is the library's role in helping to address those needs?*

Major steps included conducting focus groups with community members, surveying library patrons, discussions with Library staff, reviewing community demographic data and library statistics, discussing organizational mission, identifying service priorities, and developing detailed action plans for the first year of implementation.

The resulting strategic plan is intended to guide the Library for the next three years, with action plans to be revised annually. While the goals will remain the same, the methods of achieving those goals may change. The Library staff and Board will gather each year to review implementation successes and challenges, review goals, revise strategies and project budget needs.

## **The library's mission statement:**

*The Grand Rapids Area Library fosters a welcoming environment that builds a connected, informed, engaged community.*

## **Service Priorities and strategies:**

### **Service Priority 1: Parents will feel supported in preparing their preschoolers for learning success, and primary students will develop a love of reading and learning.**

To achieve this the library will:

- Offer programs for preschoolers and their families to support parents and caregivers in preparing young children for learning to read
- Support Summer and Winter Reading programs and other programs to develop and maintain early literacy and reading skills
- Offer high-interest books and engaging programs to improve reading skills of beginning readers (ages 5-9)
- Work with schools, day-cares and other agencies to provide services to preschool and elementary students
- Design a space and develop programs and activities to actively engage elementary age children

**Service Priority 2: Individuals will be supported in their personal search for knowledge and development of skills and careers.**

To achieve this goal the library will:

- Offer a collection of general information resources in print, electronic and other formats on a wide variety of topics
- Support achievement of personal educational goals for adults and families at all levels of educational achievement
- Implement and enhance book discussion groups, community forums, author visits, lectures and discussion and other opportunities for exploring and learning at all ages
- Provide resources to assist with job searching and career planning
- Provide computers for use in job searches or applications
- Promote use of specialized databases for Do-it-yourself repair, job search help and homework help
- Provide programs that enhance the acquisition of knowledge and the development of skills

**Service Priority 3: Individuals will have access to online resources that connect them to their community and the world.**

To achieve this the library will:

- Provide computers in the library with internet access and up-to-date software
- Provide wireless internet access
- Provide individual assistance with computers
- Collaborate with other organizations to provide training and resources
- Provide a web site that serves as an access point for online resources
- Ensure staff members keep abreast of current technology

**Service Priority 4: Individuals will enjoy varied options that enrich their leisure time, broaden their world view, and inspire their creativity.**

To achieve this the library will:

- Build collections of high-demand popular and informational materials in a wide range of formats
- Coordinate a community-wide reading project annually
- Offer programs on various aspects of different cultures, beliefs and lifestyles
- Mount exhibits and displays that reflect diversity
- Offer programs that encourage and inspire creativity and collaboration

**Service Priority 5: Individuals and organizations will experience a comfortable, safe quiet and welcoming place.**

To achieve this the library will:

- Maintain an attractive and functional physical space
- Take advantage of outdoor space around the Library

**Service Priority 6: Individuals will find opportunities to work together, share ideas, discuss, and collaborate.**

To achieve this the library will:

- Rearrange space to allow for more small group meetings and collaborations
- Provide programs that facilitate discussion and collaboration

These goals will shape the decisions about the library's budget and implementing specific projects from 2014-2017. Detailed action plans for the next 12 months were developed.

To ensure that we are making progress toward each service priority we will measure participation in programs and circulation of materials as well as satisfaction of patrons. The strategies will be reviewed as part of the annual review process. The library is committed to meeting the needs of the community and will develop services as the needs of the community change.

**Planning Team members:**

Library Board: Dennis Jerome, Shannon Benolken, Abby Kuschel, Janet Neurauder, Mary Helen Haarklau, Jean MacDonell, Max Peters, John Soll, Dave Yankowiak Friends of the Library: Sandy Hughes, Program Committee: Stephanie Kessler , Library Staff: Marcia Anderson, Amy Dettmer, Darla Kirwin, Will Richter, Bonnie Henriksen.