Draft strategic plan – 2024 v. 5

**MISSION**

The Rachel Kohl Community Library aims to improve the quality of life in our communities, by providing the resources that will enable residents to learn, meet, enjoy and grow.

**VISION**

The Rachel Kohl Community Library will be a most valued learning, leisure and enrichment center thereby connecting the communities we serve now and into the future..

**OUR VALUES**

* We will remove barriers to information access by creating an accessible, safe and welcoming space.
* We will provide outstanding customer service, while treating our patrons with dignity, compassion, respect and sensitivity.
* We believe that the key to our success is to build community participation, engagement and presence inside and outside the library walls.
* We will anticipate and create tomorrow’s library, while we listen to and respond to the needs of the community today.
* We believe that we can act as a catalyst to connect our community to information, knowledge, resources….and each other.

**BACKGROUND**

In 1979 the Community Township Library, as it was then known, opened in a vacant closet at Concord Elementary School.

In 1981, the library joined the newly formed Delaware County Library System which offers services to member libraries. In addition, the library’s service area was expanded from the original three communities of Concord, Bethel and Chester Heights to also include Chadds Ford and Thornbury.

Through private donations and a $300,000 federal library grant, land on Smithbridge Road was purchased to build a stand-alone library. In 1989, the Rachel Kohl Community Library opened and was named for the woman who, with a cadre of volunteers, created the community treasure we now enjoy.

**STRENGTHENING THE LIBRARY BY LOOKING OUT**

**GOALS**

**LEARN/ENJOY**: BE A CENTER FOR LEARNING AND ENRICHMENT

1. Create a collection of materials that reflect and expand our community members’ knowledge and enjoyment. This collection will include books in English and non-English languages, digital resources, Library of Things, games, puzzles and other items as they become available.
2. Enhance access to our collections through improved signage, finding aids and displays. Research and implement an alternative to the Dewey Decimal System.
3. Ensure that our resources reflect the diversity of our community, state and country; thus leading to creativity, intellectual curiosity, social interaction, and community involvement.
4. The library will at all times protect our residents’ right to read and consume information of their choice.
5. Expand our programming for both children and adults. Be creative & innovative with programming.
6. Ensure our services and technology are being fully utilized.
7. Anticipate technological changes and new ways of delivering services.

**MEET**: EXPAND OUR PATRON BASE

1. Create an outreach plan. Expand our marketing efforts to ensure our communities recognize and appreciate the value the library brings to our region’s quality of life.
2. Build partnerships with businesses, religious institutions, municipalities and nonprofits who share our values, to meet and engage with the people they serve.
3. Extend the home delivery service to anyone who cannot physically visit the library.
4. Discover how groups seek and receive information and integrate that knowledge into our outreach plan.
5. Participate in municipal events, story times etc. to increase visibility. Offer library services at non-library events.
6. Ensure library facilities are conducive to community programming and meeting.
7. Anticipate and respond to the emerging demographics of our communities.

**GROW**: MAINTAIN FINANCIAL STABILITY

1. Our fiscal and financial management will be accurate and transparent at all times.
2. We will educate our public to better understand how the library is funded and its costs, with the goal of increasing support and donors.
3. We will establish funding targets for each municipality based on a minimum of $5 per capita. Pitch funding increases in September, prior to municipal budget talks.
4. We will recruit business sponsors for programs and specific library needs.
5. We will maintain the library reserve fund according to Board policy.
6. We will continue efforts to increase revenue through meeting room rentals, book sales etc. and will investigate other potential income producing activities.
7. We will be mindful of spending at every level and will seek out less expensive alternatives for all of our expenditures.
8. We will seek sources of funding beyond government and individual donors and investigate grant opportunities for which we are eligible and for which there is a reasonable expectation we could qualify.
9. The Board will create a Development Council consisting of community members who will advocate on behalf of the library and focus on raising funds.

**STRENGTHENING THE LIBRARY BY**

**LOOKING IN**

INVEST IN OUR EMPLOYEES

1. The library will invest in the growth and development of library staff.
2. The library will offer professional development opportunities, when available.
3. The library will offer sustainable benefits and competitive wages to retain current staff and recruit new members.

FACILITIES

1. We will maintain the facilities’ improvements that have been made in the last 8 years. This includes interior paint, windows, siding, HVAC, accessible doors, carpeting, roof, interior LED lighting, expansion of exterior LED lighting, etc.
2. We will continue improvements in the small study rooms and children’s room.
3. We will recruit and retain volunteers to maintain the garden and recruit a landscaping/garden center with whom to partner.
4. We will apply for a Keystone grant to improve the staff and public bathrooms.

STRENGTHEN OUR BOARD

1. Maintain a Board composed of members who collectively have the skills needed to raise funds, interact with municipal residents and leaders; and represent the library with passion and accuracy.
2. Ensure that all board members understand how libraries are funded in the state and county. Board members should be familiar with the funding issues facing the library and the role their municipality plays in the funding scheme.
3. Ensure that board members understand their relationship to the administration of the library.
4. Focus board activity principally on those actions that lead to increased funding across all revenue segments.
5. The Board will ensure that any and all requirements of funding sources will be met.
6. Board members should participate in at least one educational program offered by PANO, DCLB or the state Office of Commonwealth Libraries annually.
7. Board members should attend at least ½ of their municipalities’ meetings annually and submit a monthly summary of library activities to their municipality.