

# **Sycamore Public Library Long Range Plan**

## **2008-2011**

Approved 10/12/04  
Revised Approved 4/8/2008

The following document is the long range plan for the Sycamore Public Library. It includes a short history of the library, our vision, community assets, our mission, goal, objectives and evaluative components.

### **A Short History of the Sycamore Public Library**

Although the Sycamore Public Library did not open its doors until 1892, we can trace its roots back to 1875 when a Chautauqua Scientific Circle was formed in Sycamore. Once members had completed the course, they established the Athena Literary Society in order to form a public library. Over the course of three years they raised \$700 and asked city council to appropriate money for books and that the mayor appoint a board of directors.

On July 12, 1892, the Sycamore Public Library opened in Hoyt and Rogers' Store, second floor, in the backroom. This building now is occupied by Marlyn's Majorettes. The City Council appropriated \$800 to purchase books. The Athena Literary Society assisted with funding the library for the first two years. Miss Flora Jeannette Dow, a member of Athena, was the first librarian.

In 1902, Andrew Carnegie offered the City of Sycamore \$10,000 for the construction of a library, provided an acceptable site could be secured and that the Sycamore City Council would annually appropriate at least 10% of his donation for maintaining the building. Mr. Frederick B. Townsend donated the property where the library stands today.

Miss Dow received the honor of placing the first trowel of mortar on the cornerstone on May 24, 1905.

Over the next 90 years, several renovation and remodeling projects took place and then on October 14, 1995, a new era of growth began with the groundbreaking ceremony for the library expansion.

Today we are looking at ways to serve the community's needs by providing the best possible services and programs available.

### **Our Vision**

The Sycamore Public Library is a destination for many residents of Sycamore. Our vision is that the Library will be a dynamic essential destination for every resident of Sycamore. We seek to strengthen and expand each resident's opportunity for discovery, learning and community interaction. The Library is housed in an historic building in the heart of Sycamore's vital downtown; our physical location represents our place in the center of the community.

Our Long-Range Plan that ran from 2004 – 2007, looked at services and library operations, but lacked a clear picture of capital and operational financial needs because the 21,000 sq. ft. addition was only six years old. The community has changed dramatically during the past five years due to rapid growth throughout DeKalb County. The Library has kept pace with these changes by offering creative and responsive programming and enhancing community awareness.

As a result, 9,652 Sycamore residents have library cards. Since the beginning of FY08, an average of 130 new cards have been given out each month which is an increase of 14% over the last three years when we were giving out only 115 cards per month.

A strong, vibrant public Library is a sign of a strong, vibrant community, and is a measure of how that community values its residents. Commitment and investment by community stakeholders will help ensure a continued dynamic Library for all residents of the City of Sycamore. We encourage the City and the community to work together with us to support our Vision and to meet our goals.

### **Our Core Assets**

- Historic well-preserved building in a central location
- Diverse well-rounded collections for all ages and abilities
- Dedicated Director, Board, and Staff
- A Community who supports and uses the library
- Technological infrastructure including a wireless network, computerized catalog and databases, and computers for use by the public

### **Our Mission**

The Sycamore Public Library provides a comfortable, safe place to satisfy curiosity and stimulate the imagination.

### **Our Goal**

Every resident of Sycamore will use the Sycamore Public Library on a regular basis.

### **Our Objectives**

We seek to sustain and build on the Library's strengths while simultaneously investing in the appropriate capital and human resources necessary to meet our goal by striving to meet the following objectives through working on and evaluating the listed activities.

#### **Objective 1:** Enhance community awareness and image of the Library:

Tell the Library's story and enhance our image; create a "Brand;" involve Board members, staff, patrons and advocates in marketing efforts; use the Internet and our website to promote the Library; investigate the development of a Foundation or Ambassador team.

**Activity 1a:** Promote the library through newspapers, radio, brochures, and posters.

**Activity 1b:** Market the library utilizing all forms of integrative marketing techniques including, word-of-mouth marketing, written communications, websites, and branding.

**Activity 1c:** Advocate on behalf of the Library by ensuring that staff and board members attend local functions and highlight the Library's role and contributions to the community.

**Objective 2:** Ensure a safe and welcoming infrastructure and presence in the community: Continue to maintain and improve physical infrastructure; address security concerns and needs; accommodate and anticipate future expansion needs.

**Activity 2a:** Improve entrance for better security and air flow.

**Activity 2b:** Expand Youth Services Department to allow room to expand collections and provide more seating and study areas.

**Activity 2c:** Relocate Circulation Services to the first floor and provide all circulation services at one desk.

**Activity 2d:** Reorganize second floor to accommodate staffing changes from circulation relocations and to provide better service to teens and computer users.

**Activity 2e:** Provide all staff with an Employee Assistance Program. Offer the four in-service programs included in the EAP contract.

**Activity 2f:** Provide an annual staff training day with a goal of 85% staff attendance. Provide additional shorter meetings with the goal that 100% of library staff each year will review and understand health and safety policies and procedures.

**Objective 3:** Improve and Enhance Services:

Identify community members whose needs have not been met by the Library and work toward meeting their needs; continue to improve and expand current services, programs; continue to provide training opportunities for staff and management; continue to improve and advance technological infrastructure and services; create partnerships within community centers of influence (schools, museums, park district, senior centers, and service clubs).

**Activity 3a:** Continue to provide access to reading suggestion ideas including the incorporation of [www.splreviews.blogspot.com](http://www.splreviews.blogspot.com) to the website.

**Activity 3b:** Review, adjust, and promote the outreach service to the homebound patrons.

**Activity 3c:** Track advancements and development of new materials types such as Play-Aways, monitor their value to the community, develop budget opportunities as needed and add the new material types to the collection.

**Activity 3d:** Track usage and popularity of all material formats and transition away from those that are no longer circulating.

**Activity 3f:** Develop, promote and provide quarterly “special event” type program for adults.

**Activity 3g:** Develop, promote and provide quarterly “special event” type program for school age children.

**Activity 3h:** Continue providing storytime programs for preschool age children.

**Activity 3i:** Provide access and assistance to the Internet and office computing programs for all ages. Increase the number of available Internet computers as staffing and remodeling allow.

**Activity 3j:** Continue to assist patrons who have questions and improve the service by offering assistance more often and by asking each patron if they have found what they are looking for before they leave.

**Activity 3k:** Provide extensive staff training in areas specific to each department’s duties including technology skills and patron services. Schedule and ensure that annually, at least two employees from each department attend a class, program, or workshop that will

help them do their job better. Ensure each attendee writes a review and evaluation of the class, program, or workshop and shares the information with other staff members. Whenever possible a service or program will be improved or started from these training sessions.

- Specific areas of interest include reference service, reader's advisory, and technology assistance.

**Activity 3l:** Continue and expand Young Adult programming and SPLAG (Sycamore Public Library Advisory Group) based on the needs and dreams of the area teens.

**Activity 3m:** Continue to increase overall patron library use. (For the last three years we have added an average of 115 new library cards per month. We recognize that the economy and community growth impact this statistic.)

**Activity 3n:** Track and compile numeric statistics for circulation, program attendance, library use, and computer use to track and monitor trends and make adjustments as needed and appropriate.

Our vision is that the Library will be a dynamic essential destination for every resident of Sycamore. Our mission is to provide a comfortable, safe place to satisfy curiosity and stimulate the imagination. With this in mind, we know that this plan also needs to be dynamic and will be used as a guide and revised as necessary to meet community needs.