



The Richards Library

36 Elm Street

Warrensburg, NY 12885

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STRATEGIC PLAN **FOR** **2021-2024**

10 OCTOBER 2019

1 Introduction

1.1 PLANNING SUMMARY

To assure our library is meeting the needs of our chartered communities, The Richards Library Board of Trustees and Director met with Erica Freudenberger of the Southern Adirondack Library System in November 2018 and our Strategic Action Committee was formed.

Work immediately began and in January 2019 the Director noted in the Annual New York State Library Report that The Richards Library Strategic Plan was in development and was to be completed and approved by 31 December 2019. The plan is to be implemented in January 2020.

The Strategic Action Committee consists of Director Michael Sullivan, Board of Trustees President Esther McTague, Board of Trustees Vice-President Bridgette Connelly-Howe, Board of Trustees Financial Officer John Gitto and Board of Trustees Secretary Elaine Cowin. This committee met biweekly throughout 2019 and was responsible for conducting the communities-wide forum, and survey analysis as well as crafting this final document.

Upon completion of the DRAFT plan, it was shared with the staff and Erica Freudenberger for input. The plan was revised accordingly, voted and approved by the Board of Trustees of The Richards Library on 10 October 2019.

Unfortunately, due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 Coronavirus in March of 2020, all libraries and staff were declared as non-essential personnel by an Executive Order given by Governor Andrew Cuomo. Since the Richards Library was closed for 3 months during 2020, and gatherings of any type have been discouraged, it was agreed by the Board of Trustees of the Richards Library to adjust the Strategic Plan by 1 year at the 5 January 2021 Board meeting.

1.2 HISTORY OF THE RICHARDS LIBRARY

The Richards Library's history begins with the model generosity of iron magnate Andrew Carnegie. Although his largesse did not extend to the town of Warrensburgh, you may say he did, however, inspire, in a roundabout way, two sisters, Miss Clara Richards of Warrensburgh and Mrs. Mary Richards Kellogg of Elizabethtown to gift the town of Warrensburgh a library.

The sisters started with organizing and establishing a small lending library made up of books from the churches located in Warrensburgh and donations from others, including Stewart A. Farrar. In 1890, the Warrensburgh Circulating Library was established in the Church of the Holy Cross, the local Episcopal Church. A one dollar annual fee was instituted for the use of the library.

The sisters eventually felt that the library, although popular, did not meet the requirements of the town, so they were determined to change the current situation and install within the town The

Richards Library. A charter was granted by the University of the State of New York on 1 July 1901. The cost for the land and building was \$15,000 with an added endowment of \$40,000, the total cost to the sisters was \$55,000 (Approximately \$1,650,000 in 2019 money). The library was built of granite (dolomitic limestone) native to the area and was quarried from David Brown & Sons near the county home. Jonah Hess of Johnstown did the construction and David VanNess, also of Johnstown, did the stonework. A.W. Fuller of Albany was the chosen architect. At the time, funding for the library came from the State of New York and the town, each contributing \$100 per year (\$3000 each in 2019 money) and the remainder coming from profits supplied by investments through the endowment.

The original Board of Trustees was comprised of Miss Richards, Mrs. Kellogg, Dr. Daniel Brown, MD, Ezra Wilkins Benedict, Principal of the High School and Rev. Harte Purdy, Rector of the Church of the Holy Cross. The members were to serve 5 year terms, each member electing their own replacements, with the sisters being on the Board for life. The only change is that now the Board of Trustees can be comprised of 5-15 members.

The library collection was initially catalogued by Miss Bartlett of the Pratt Institute and the first librarian was Miss Mary S. Crandall who assumed her duties on 1 September 1901. The library continued to expand when the sisters financed and had built an addition in May of 1911. The stone, once again, came from the quarries of David Brown & Sons. In December 1914, a fire destroyed the interior of the library leaving only the walls and chimney standing. The sisters announced at a Board meeting that they would pay for the reconstruction but the town would have to replace the books. The library was rebuilt and reopened in 1915, having been rebuilt by R.H. Rheinlander.

In 1943, Miss Crandall retired due to illness and Mrs. Jennie Cameron was selected to succeed Miss Crandall, having served as an assistant since 1933. Mrs. Cameron served until 1974, when Sarah Farrar assumed her duties until her retirement in December of 2013. The current Director/Librarian is Michael Sullivan who assumed the duties in January of 2014.

During the years the library continued to expand. In 1963 a children's room was added and in 1964 the Albert Emerson Wing was built. However, as the years went by, the library became more and more in need of rehabilitation and expansion. In 2003, funds were again raised to accommodate an expansion of the building. Local entrepreneur/philanthropist Charles A. Wood donated \$50,000 and Mrs. Grace Hastings bequeathed \$100,000 to the library and a building fund was commenced. Assistance also came from then-Assemblywoman Betty O'C. Little and the good people of Warrensburg. To ensure the completion of the expansion and rehabilitation, the Board secured a Library Construction Grant from the New York State Department of Library Development and secured renewable funding from the town in the way of an annual tax levy which would supply operational/administrative support. The Richards Library "re-opened" in October 2013.

*This narrative was written from facts contained in an article in the Warrensburgh Historical Society newsletter, Vol. 2, Issue 2, dated March 1998, by Sarah Farrar entitled, "*The Founding and Early History of The Richards Library*".

2. DEMOGRAPHICS

It is important to understand the needs and interests of the members of both communities, Warrensburg and Thurman, so we can obtain materials and offer programs to better serve them. The demographic data, listed below, is gathered from the most recent U.S. Government Census in 2010 and from the 2018 Annual New York State Library Report.

Warrensburg Population: 4,602

Thurman Population: 1,219

Total Population of Both Chartered Communities: 5,821

Population under 5 years old (Both Communities): 309

School Age Population (5-19; Both Communities): 1,051

Adult (20-59; Both Communities): 3,025

Seniors (60-85+; Both Communities): 1,436

Hours Open per Week: 42

Library Materials Circulated in 2018: 24,604

Interlibrary Loan, Materials Borrowed from Other Libraries-2018: 5,154

Interlibrary Loan, Materials Loaned to Other Libraries-2018: 4,295

Programs Held: 195

Program Attendees: 3,047

Funding for Fiscal Year 2018 came from the following sources:

Total:	\$159,751
Ed. Law, Sect. 259 Tax Levy	\$141,000
Warren Co. Aid	\$4,375
LLSA	\$1,557
Add'l State Aid-SALS	\$2,500
Cash Grants	\$5,000
Library Charges	\$2,048
Other	\$3,271

3. VISION STATEMENT

The Richards Library provides opportunities for its patrons to develop as global citizens, where all are welcome to learn, discuss, explore, share and grow. We empower our patrons to make a positive difference in their lives by building partnerships, sharing ideas, and championing the cultural lives of the communities we serve.

4. MISSION STATEMENT

The Richards Library provides a wide-range of unbiased sourced materials and utilizes traditional and modern methods that will educate, inform, entertain and provide the basis for a life-long learning experience. We offer the communities of Warrensburg and Thurman a safe space that encourages inquiries, free thought, an exchange of ideas and a forum for discussion. As we strive to expand the communities' global knowledge, we also endeavor to expand and preserve its cultural and historical uniqueness within that global setting and to ensure that The Richards Library remains forever relevant.

5. GOALS

5.1 Goal 1: Raise the Library's profile within the Chartered communities of Warrensburg and Thurman.

The Director, Staff and Board of Trustees will work to raise the profile of The Richards Library within the communities it is chartered to serve. Recognizing the diverse needs of these communities, the focus will address the unique needs of each community.

Objective 1:

Establish an ongoing presence in Thurman.

Plan of Action:

- Attend monthly Town of Thurman Board Meetings.
- Acquire space in the Town of Thurman Town Hall for promoting upcoming events at The Richards Library.
- Establish a Richards Library presence at various Thurman town-wide events.

Objective 1A:

Raise the profile of The Richards Library in Warrensburg.

Plan of Action:

- Increase the number of Facebook "Likes" and/or Followers by 5% annually.
- Increase the number of visits to the web page by 1% annually.
- Attend monthly Town of Warrensburg Board Meetings.
- Increase presence at Warrensburg town-wide events.

Resources: Thurman

- The Richards Library will donate and install a bulletin board for promotion of upcoming events.
- The Board of Trustees will create a schedule for attendance at Thurman Town Hall meetings that alternates with Warrensburg Town Hall meetings on a monthly basis.
- The Board of Trustees will acquire a space at town-wide events providing their own materials, such as a portable canopy, table and chairs from which to pass out information concerning

upcoming events and/or fundraising programs.

Resources: Warrensburg

- The Board of Trustees will create a schedule for attendance at Warrensburg Town Hall meetings that alternates with Thurman Town Hall meetings on a monthly basis.
- The Board of Trustees will acquire a space at town-wide events providing their own materials, such as a portable canopy, table and chairs from which to pass out information concerning upcoming events and/or fundraising programs.

Measure and Evaluate Goal 1:

The primary indicator of success or achievement of raising the Library's presence/profile, i.e., Goal 1 and 1A would be a marked increase in the attendance of any and all Library sponsored events/programs. The various actions of attending Town Board meetings, having a promotion space, and being present at town-wide events in both chartered communities would reinforce the planned actions and utilized resources as being successful. As for measuring an increase in the number of "Likes", Followers and web page hits, as specified in the Plan of Action for Objective 1A, the Director can monitor any increase from Facebook generated statistics and for increases in web page activities, through the yearly data supplied by SALS.

5.2 Goal 2: Attract more Young Adult Patrons.

The Director and Staff will investigate and implement opportunities for Young Adults (YA) to interact and engage in services unique to their interests and increase their presence in the library.

Objective:

Establish physical space within the library dedicated to YA interests and concerns and increase the number of YA visits and utilization of the library by 2%.

Plan of Action:

- Clearly communicate to visitors the area for YAs (signage) and create an appealing atmosphere for these patrons.
- Create a survey of YA (Grades 5-11) to create a library wish list for services that will attract them to the library.
- Develop a 'Geek Squad' to assist senior patrons with tech issues.
- Provide a dedicated area for podcasting, streaming, etc.

Resources:

-Acquire:

- *Appropriate furniture, internet connections (Wi-Fi already available) and tech charging stations.
- *Enhancement to the YA collection, i.e., books, CDs, DVDs and games with gaming stations.
- *Presenting YA-centric programming that reflects their interests.

-Source:

- *Gradual increase in yearly budgets focusing on books, CDs, DVDs, programming, etc.

- *Utilizing grants through SALS, NYS Senate Bullet Grants, and available grants through Professional Library Organizations and/or local organizations.
- *Utilizing current available space in new ways.

Measure and Evaluate Goal 2:

This portion of the community is difficult for any library to attract. Recognizing them and inquiring about their needs directly is a major step in attracting them to the library. A simple accumulation of daily, monthly and yearly tallies is the most effective way to measure the success of the Plan of Action and reach our goal of a 2% increase in YA attendance and interaction with the library. This tracking is already accomplished by the Director and Staff as a normal part of daily duties.

5.3 Goal 3: Increase Programming.

The Director and Staff will work toward increasing the number and content of programs to benefit all age levels with special attention given to the enrichment of our communities.

Objective:

Programs will be available throughout the year.

Plan of Action:

- Partner with the community.
- Increase programming for senior patrons.
- Increase adult programming.
- Partner with the Cornell Co-operative Extension.
- Partner with members of the community that have certain skills and expertise in varied interests who would be invited to present programs.
- Monthly Thematic Book Displays will be featured tying in with scheduled programming.
- Game/Movie Nights.
- Partnering with LARAC.
- Increase Summer Reading Program by creating a partnership with TD Bank.

Resources:

- Planned Programming Budget increase for FY 2021.
- Extend community network of experts by asking them to volunteer to present programs.
- Continue movie licensing with SWANK.
- Utilize Staff for creation of monthly themed book displays with possible tie-ins with projected programs.

Measure and Evaluate Goal 3:

The measurement and evaluation of this goal can be simply accounted by an increase in programming and program attendance which is currently monitored for inclusion into the Annual New York State Library Report.

Goal 5.4: Change Hours of Operation.

In order to provide the communities with a workable availability that meets their day-to-day schedule, the Director and the Board of Trustees feels that a change to the Hours of Operation will meet this goal.

Objective:

To meet the patrons need for access to their library, the hours of operation will be adjusted.

Plan of Action:

- Advertise to patrons the change of Hours of Operation and when it is to take effect.
- Explain change is due to results of Community-wide Survey.

Resources:

- Library Facebook page, Library web site, postings in library and throughout Warrensburg and Thurman.
- Placement of notice in The Sun and The Chronicle local newspapers.

Measure and Evaluate Goal 4:

This portion will be handled by keeping statistics for attendance during the later hours the Library is open and they will be compared to an earlier statistic that showed that later hours versus earlier hour attendance, near closing times, was virtually the same.

6. Conclusion:

The Richards Library Strategic Planning Committee has formulated a viable and attainable set of goals for the Library to serve the communities of Warrensburg and Thurman. These goals will not only raise the profile of the Richards Library, but also enhance the communities the library serves.