

# PROGRESS REPORT

## Six Months of the Anchorage Public Library Community Plan



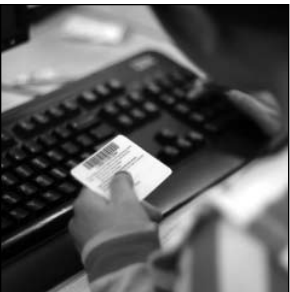
### THE PLAN

The Anchorage Public Library Community Plan challenged our community to imagine a world-class, 21st century public library for Anchorage and over 6,000 people helped shape a community-supported plan to turn this vision into reality. The plan was released in December 2009 and the findings are unsettling—our public library is in a struggle for survival. If left unchecked, current funding trends will lead to a library that is at best mediocre and at worst irrelevant.

But, it doesn't have to be that way. The Library Community Plan offers exciting recommendations on how to turn our library into an indispensable resource for the community.

Since the release of the plan, the Anchorage Public Library and its partners have implemented many of the plan's recommendations and we are already seeing great results! We've focused on five categories to move APL beyond survival mode, into a thriving public library:

1. Create a more welcoming, community-centered library.
2. Encourage a new generation of library users while engaging traditional users.
3. Enhance customer service.
4. Let people know what the library offers.
5. Reduce operating costs and secure new sources of funding.



### THE RESULTS

#### 1. Create a more welcoming, community-center library.

- Partnered with Anchorage Museum on Star Wars exhibit with displays and programs at Loussac and branches. Star Wars trivia at Chugiak-Eagle River had over 100 participants.
- Partnered with community organizations to expand adult programs, such as Iditarod history storytelling, Medicare information sessions, Constitutional Conversation Salons, and summer Tai Chi on the lawn at Loussac.
- Improved indoor signage at Loussac to be cleaner, more helpful and visually appealing.

#### *Next Steps:*

- Developing a library docent volunteer program to assist with events and workshops.
- Expanding book discussions by offering a training for prospective APL volunteer discussion hosts; the hosts will allow the library to offer multiple book discussions each month.
- Working with Museum to partner on upcoming Andy Warhol and Dinosaur exhibits.
- Working to increase use of display space at Loussac for local artists and community groups.

#### 2. Encourage a new generation of library users while engaging traditional users.

- Created Facebook page to expand our audience for PR—over 1200 fans in first four months.
- Translated library card brochure into Russian; looking for translators for other languages.
- Eliminated red-tape on sign-up for youth library cards to encourage more youth readers.

#### *Next Steps:*

- Preparing a website redesign to make it more user-friendly and use less library lingo.
- Pursuing the creation of a teen center at Loussac with financial support from Downtown Rotary and Rasmuson Foundation.



# OUR LIBRARY CAN **SURVIVE** *and* **THRIVE** INTO THE FUTURE

## 3. Enhance customer service.

- Updated library card brochure to ensure consistency of messages to patrons; updating website to match.
- In response to customer feedback, the \$5 processing fee that is assessed on lost/overdue books is now removed when items are returned.
- Reorganized circulation and dispatch departments to improve efficiency and streamline frontline service.
- Created a new biography section and revised process of cataloging biographies; saves staff time and eases process for patrons (biography circulation has increased significantly since making this change).
- Implemented a customer program evaluation for the end of each event/workshop.

### *Next Steps:*

- Developing a FAQ sheet for shelving staff to help them deliver better customer service on the frontlines.
- Developing process to better train frontline staff before major changes are implemented.
- Developing a process for staff feedback/suggestions to ensure all levels of staff have a voice in improving the library.

## 4. Let people know what the library offers.

- Redesigned library publications to have consistent branding; reformatted monthly calendar and created a template for event fliers.
- Created a monthly e-newsletter to distribute event calendar—over 1,000 subscribers after the first two months.
- Developed event check-list to ensure consistent and widespread PR for events.
- Utilize new Facebook site to send event announcements and promote lesser-known services.
- Developed word-of-mouth campaign to have all staff on the same message for a month or so at a time; used it to promote online services and alert patrons of our recent fine increase.

### *Next Steps:*

- Working with KTVA television station to produce a monthly feature on the library.

## 5. Reduce operating costs and secure new sources of funding.

- Cleaned library patron records and reduced user errors by purging long-expired users, instituting card renewals every 3 years and requiring a library card for all transactions.
- Improved process for sending out overdue fine and collection notices to reduce errors.
- Reduced annual operating expenses by dropping courier service from 6 to 5 days/wk; shortening hours of shipping/receiving at Loussac; and renegotiating contract for catalog software (SIRSI).
- Updated fees and fines to help recoup costs—instituted fee for interlibrary loans and increased fines on overdue materials.
- Friends of the Library and Library Foundation enlisted Library Strategies to help a strategic partnership and create fundraising plans.

### *Next Steps:*

- Reposition self-check machines to increase use and ease demand on staff.
- Investigating upgrade of system for holds, renewals and overdue notices to include phone, email and text options.
- Friends of the Library and Library Foundation continue to increase outreach and fundraising efforts.



## Our Library needs *your* help

The *Anchorage Library Foundation* and the *Friends of the Library* developed the *Anchorage Public Library Community Plan* to shape the future of our city's Public Library. The plan comes as the Anchorage Public Library experiences record-high usage and provides more services with less resources. Our Library can help build an even more vibrant, strong and successful community. We need your involvement and support to chart a course toward more relevant, convenient, innovative and community-oriented libraries in this 21st Century.

**Spread the Word!** Talk to community leaders, elected officials and neighbors--help get the entire community behind this effort.

**Partner with the Library!** Collaborate with the Library to expand your audience and broaden the impact of your community events.

**Support the Library!** Become a member of the Friends of the Library to buy materials and sponsor library programs. Donate to the Anchorage Library Foundation to invest in the long-term growth of the Anchorage Public Library.

[www.FriendsAPL.org](http://www.FriendsAPL.org)

[www.AnchorageLibraryFoundation.org](http://www.AnchorageLibraryFoundation.org)

Call 343-2983 to learn more.