



Annual President's Report for FY 2013
May 2012 to April 2013

Our major focus in the beginning of FY 2013 was to complete the search for a new Director. The Search Committee began the interview process in late FY 2012 and continued until an offer was extended to John Mitchell in June 2012.

Standing Committees actively met the entire year. Fundraising efforts were limited to placing cookbooks at local businesses and city hall, which generated \$395, and volunteer Kay Kelly continued her book sale efforts, which generated \$1,365. Board and Director desire starting a Friends group, once the Director has time to manage the group.

Director Search

The interview process consisted of an initial phone interview with a member of the Search Committee for each candidate that submitted a resume. From that initial group, candidates were selected for a face to face interview with the Search Committee. Two candidates were selected from that group for a final interview by the Board. President conducted interviews with references.

New Director and Staff Changes

John Mitchell started mid-August and almost immediately had to deal with some staff departures. He had to quickly get up to speed to gain an understanding of the library's needs and operations in order to recruit new staff, and spent time working the circ desk during the recruitment period. He made good hiring decisions, with one significant change being 100% coverage of the children's area during peak children's use with the hiring of two part time children's librarians.

We hired Zabinski Consulting to provide accounting/bookkeeping services when our part time office administrator resigned to accept a full time position. The firm has several library clients.

Master Plan for Future Renovations

FGM Architects completed their work on the Master Plan in the fall and delivered the final product to the Board. The Master Plan was instrumental in giving the Board the ability to apply for the Illinois State Library's Live and Learn grant. Without it, we would not have been able to apply.

Staff Area and Storage Room

Great improvements to the staff area due to a de-cluttering and re-organization effort. The area now has a cleaner, more open look, and was made more functional. Back storage space has also been cleared out of outdated items.

Live and Learn Grant

In January, we applied for the Illinois State Library's Live and Learn grant. We were positioned to do so because we had a Master Plan developed, which included an estimated budget, which was a requirement in the grant application. The project submitted was to renovate the east building, which included creating an ADA accessible entrance into the east building, a programming room, meeting room, and men and women's bathrooms. Due to the limited time available to prepare the grant, and

the extensive writing component, the Board hired a grant writer to work with the Director. Her credentials include past experience in fundraising and grant writing and she currently works for a library.

The Director had several phone conversations with Mark Shaeffer, coordinator at the State Library and he attended the grant committee's meeting in Springfield. Unfortunately, we were not selected as the recipient; the highest amount awarded was about \$78,000. We did have the 4th highest score out of about 10 libraries that applied.

Participation in Pumpkin Fest

The library was selected by the city as the recipient of the Discover Card Pumpkin Carving Challenge, which required that the participating city give the monetary award to an entity involved with education. In order to try and win Discover Card's top prize of \$1 per pumpkins carved, the library hosted a carving challenge. The city came in second in the contest and received \$10,000 from Discover Card.

Community Outreach and City Relations

Relations are good and of a cooperative nature with city staff, city manager, and the city's Finance Director. We had support from the majority of the city council who approved the entire tax levy amount requested.

We hosted a well-attended meeting with the educators from District 112 and 113 and local service agencies to introduce John to the group, to develop a mutually beneficial partnership, and to get input regarding how to better serve children of the community.

Director began attending Chamber of Commerce meetings and has developed a good relationship with the Highwood Historical Society, who was thrilled to be given two opportunities to decorate our window. Director and President also met with Highland Park Library Director, Jane Conway.

We marched in the anniversary of Highwood parade and had a table set up with crafts for a few of the Highwood Farmer's Markets.

Programming

Regularly occurring adult programming continues (e.g. two adult book clubs, Sherlock Holmes and Current events). Director desires to add more adult programming but time has been limited during this transitioning period.

The addition of two part time Children's librarians has allowed for an increase in the frequency of children's Saturday programming. New movie night programming was introduced and has been a huge success. Tutoring continues and the K-9 Reading Buddies of the North Shore program ran from October through March.

Operations

The Director has streamlined operations by instituting changes to the way business is conducted. He is working on staff training to bring more consistency to the delivery of patron services. He is working on standardizing procedures. Weeding is also up to date in the children's and youth collection.