



Director's Annual Report FY19

During fiscal year 2019, the Library Board embarked on an ambitious plan that focused on three main strategic priorities: Library as a Place, Library as a Platform, and Library as Literacy. This plan included the recruitment of a new Executive Director (ED) tasked with implementing the new strategic direction. Since my arrival on February 18, 2019, I have established the following:

- On-going community environmental scans to determine how the Library can be more relevant and responsive to community needs.
- The outcome of the environmental and community conversations have led in the creation of new Library programming that includes; Spanish GED classes, Conversation ESL classes, English Citizenship classes, Adult Art classes, Girls grades 4-5 Robotics classes as well as the implementation of a quarterly Electronic Newsletter with the plan of email distribution to patrons.

The Library Board of Directors and the ED determined that it is critical to raise much needed funding to supplement and support the extensive programming the Library is now offering as well as developing Library ambassadors, champions and volunteers. For that reason, The Friends of the Highwood Public Library was established. The Friends of the Highwood Public Library is a registered 501 (c) (3) organization with a vibrant board excited to begin their efforts. The addition of the Friends as a 501 (c) (3) organization provides the Library with funding sources for which it otherwise was not previously eligible.

The Friends of the Highwood Public Library is making plans to host book sales and have a presence during various Highwood summer festivals in order to increase Friends' membership and donations.

The East Building has resulted in a more efficient and effective use of Library space and assets. Local partners and non-profits have hosted programs in the meeting room. A new policy was created to allow the use of the meeting room before and/or after Library hours, for a fee to cover our costs. This is now a new source of revenue for the Library.

The East Building is experiencing water leakage issues by the picture window. This has been an on-going issue that is being addressed to find the source. The remediation is unknown at this time, but may require the replacement and reinstallation of the window, application of a seal on the limestone material, and of course, the repair of the water damaged walls.

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The two major capital improvements completed in this fiscal year was the tuck-pointing and roof replacement of the East Building. We are having this work reviewed to understand why the picture window is continuing to leak.

In the area of technology, the Library now has fully implemented the Apollo ILS and all staff has been fully trained. Staff and patrons find Apollo ILS easy to use and feature-rich.

Computer usage is on the rise. In August 2018, computer logins totaled 231 and total computer usage minutes were 12,166. In April 2019, we saw a surge of computer usage with a total number of 294 logins and total minutes of computer usage of 17,508. This surge can be explained in part by new children's computer usage rules that allow access to a variety of non-violent games and puzzles.

Thanks to our IT consultant, the Library continues to stay competitive with its computer offerings while remaining within a tight budget. The Library placed a wireless router in the Young Adult Area for more enhanced wireless meeting room coverage.

In addition to the introduction of new programs within a span of only three months, I have begun weeding the collection and made a few esthetic changes to the interior of the Library. During all this change, our staff has been able to continue to offer consistent, quality customer service to Library patrons.

The Children's Department continues to offer its excellent variety of programming and has even added some programs. The K9 Reading Buddies continued to offer sessions during the school year. During the year, the department offered its usual holiday and special programs such as:

- Easter egg decoration
- An Easter bunny and magic show
- A visit from Santa
- A Halloween Fest
- The Mad Hatters
- Movie Nights
- The Summer Reading Program
- Story times Teen crafts

The Children's Department added some programs, including an adult crafts program on Saturdays for the mothers of the children attending the story times and children's craft

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programs. An additional bimonthly handcrafts program sponsored by the Together for Childhood Network has also been on-going.

The Adult services department has kept up with its program offerings as well. The Library continued to host its book club as well as the Sherlock Holmes and Current Events discussion groups. The Adult services department started offering a variety of adult literacy focused programs that include Spanish GED, Conversation ESL and Citizenship classes with approximately 50 students participating.

The Adult services department also worked with other organizations to provide additional programming. Some of the offerings included:

- The City of Highwood Chamber of Commerce Trick or Treat Event
- An online tax program from United Way of Lake County
- The Recycle Sight Program from the Lions International

The Library also joined with the city in the HELP program to promote workplace safety and started participating in the safety meetings through that program.

The Library has continued to partner with key local non-profits as well as the local school district in order to collaborate and provide access to resources.

All these changes have not only helped the Library improve the services it offers to its patrons, they have set the stage for new and better changes to come.

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