Report to the Community

2010

The Seattle Public Library

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Dear friends,

A large focus of 2010 was developing a new Strategic Plan — the blueprint for the Library’s future! Residents were invited to participate through open houses, citywide forums, focus groups and a survey that was completed by nearly 33,000 people!

Our new mission statement, “The Seattle Public Library brings people, information and ideas together to enrich lives and build community,” is the inspiration for why we open our doors every day.

Budget cuts were a major concern with continued reduced city revenue and competing demands for limited funds. A $1.7 million cut to the Library budget resulted in severe reductions to branch hours and the collection, a week-long shutdown of the entire Library system and the elimination of staff positions. We also increased fines and fees.

An anonymous donor — who read about our budget situation — pledged $500,000 if it could be matched by community contributions. The additional $500,000 was raised by year’s end, thanks to the generosity of the people of Seattle!

Despite continued challenges, the Library remains committed to providing exceptional service. We added a Text A Librarian service and developed a mobile app called “SPL Mobile” to better serve patrons on the go. We also unveiled a new catalog that makes searching for Library items easier and offers social networking features. More than 14 million people visited the Library and over 11 million items were circulated last year.

President Obama has asked Susan Hildreth to lead the Institute of Museum and Library Services so she will be leaving Seattle early next year. The Library system will be in good hands under the leadership of Human Resources Director Lin Schnell as interim CEO. Our strong Library system would not be possible without the support of our elected officials, The Seattle Public Library Foundation, Friends of The Seattle Public Library, and our hardworking staff and volunteers. There’s excitement on the horizon as we begin implementation of the Strategic Plan and the arrival of a new city librarian!
Operating hours reduced
The Library reduced operating hours in February to help address a $1.7 million cut to the budget. Fifteen branches are now closed Friday and Sunday, in addition to having reduced hours the days they are open. Fewer programs are held at those locations. The Library also cut the budget for books and materials, closed the entire system Aug. 30 - Sept. 7 and eliminated positions in management and administration.

Fines and fees increased
To encourage the timely return of materials and raise revenue, the Library increased fines and fees in November. The fine for most overdue materials is now 25 cents a day. The printing fee is now 15 cents a page from Library computers. Parents now receive notices from a collection agency when their children’s Library accounts are overdue by $25 or more.

Anonymous donor pledges $500,000
An anonymous donor pledged $500,000 if the Library Foundation could raise a matching amount. The successful “Help Us Make a $1 Million” campaign for the Library raised $675,600 from 4,439 donors by year’s end.

Paper notices eliminated
To save money and reduce paper waste, the Library no longer sends paper notices to patrons. Information about overdue materials or fines is delivered by email or phone message. The change took effect July 1.

Kill A Watt
Patrons can now check out a device that measures the amount of electricity used by computers, flat-screen televisions, lamps, iPods and other electronics used in homes and businesses. The device is called Kill A Watt. This green initiative was developed in partnership with Seattle City Light.
Two join Library Board

Dan Dixon and Theresa Fujiwara were confirmed to the Library Board. Dixon, vice president of external affairs for Swedish Medical Center, was appointed by former Mayor Greg Nickels. Fujiwara, strategy and policy adviser for the White Center Community Development Association, was appointed by Mayor Mike McGinn.

Hildreth nominated for IMLS post

In October, President Barack Obama announced his intent to nominate City Librarian Susan Hildreth to head the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The Library Board immediately began a nationwide search for a replacement. Hildreth was confirmed by the U.S. Senate in December and Human Resources Director Lin Schnell was named interim Library CEO.

Central Library entrance

The Library replaced the Central Library’s worn out revolving doors at the Fourth Avenue entrance with double “pull” doors designed for heavily used public entries. The project was timed to coincide with the Library’s weeklong furlough.

West Seattle Branch

The West Seattle Branch closed for approximately a month to complete a roof project.
Text a Librarian
Text a Librarian service debuted, allowing patrons to get answers to brief questions — up to 160 characters — via text messaging. More than 70 libraries nationwide collaborate to offer this service.

SPL Mobile
The Library launched a mobile app for Web-enabled phones called SPL Mobile. The application allows patrons to browse and reserve books and materials from the online catalog, find out about Library programs, search the hours and addresses of Library locations and more.

Online tutoring program expanded
The Library’s online tutoring service now helps immigrants, job seekers and college students. The service is offered in English and Spanish. The Library had already been providing online homework help for K-12 students.

Teen E-News

New online catalog
A new online catalog was launched making it easier to search for books and materials. Patrons can also write reviews and share book lists using the social networking features.

2 million items
The Library offers a collection of nearly 2 million items for all ages, 80 premium reference databases and over 78,000 digital downloadable e-books, e-audiobooks and music and video files.

295,000 new items
More than 295,000 new items were added to the Library collection in 2010, including:

- 183,322 books
- 77,656 DVDs, music CDs and audiobooks
- 34,587 digital downloadable files.

New databases
- Puget Sound Business Journal Book of Lists Online
- Before You Know It, which offers beginning to intermediate instruction in over 70 languages.
- The Seattle Times Historical Archives (1896-1984 editions).

New digitized collections
- The digitized Northwest Art Collection features 85 drawings, paintings and prints from important Northwest artists, such as Mark Tobey, Helmi Juvonen and many others.
- The digitized Historic Photograph Collection includes approximately 100 photographs of the early history and development of Seattle, including images of Seattle’s Great Fire in 1889 and portraits of Chief Sealth’s daughter Princess Angeline.
The Seattle Times – “A Year in Pictures”
The Library partnered with The Seattle Times to present “The Seattle Times Year in Pictures 2010,” a slideshow and discussion of some of the Times’ most memorable photos of the year. More than 35 editors, photographers and writers from the Times were present. Patrons began lining up two hours before the event.

SAM – Free Library card day
More than 1,000 Library patrons used their Library cards to visit the Seattle Art Museum for free on Sunday, Feb. 28. Anyone who presented a Library card received free admission.

United Way/AARP – Free tax assistance
Patrons received free assistance completing tax returns, as well as eligibility screenings for public benefits through a partnership with United Way of King County and AARP.

Team Read
The Central Library hosted an all-day family read aloud on March 14 with Team Read tutors. Team Read is an after-school reading program where older students help younger students learn to read. Team Read’s goal is to help students achieve grade level reading through one-on-one support. More than 12,000 student readers and student tutors have participated in Team Read to date.

U.S. Census – Questionnaire Assistance Centers
Sixteen Library locations hosted U.S. Census Questionnaire Assistance Centers. The centers provided additional questionnaires and help with filling them out, as well as drop-off boxes for completed forms.

Seattle Theatre Group – Flash mob!
About 90 teens participating in a summer dance program with partner organization Seattle Theatre Group performed to “I Wanna Dance With Somebody” inside the Central Library on July 1. The spontaneous performance, or “flash mob,” was videoed and posted on YouTube.

University of Washington – An Open Conversation About Wiki Leaks
The Library partnered with the University of Washington’s Master of Communication in Digital Media program’s forum on “Open Secrets: An Open Conversation About WikiLeaks and Information Transparency in America” on Dec. 10. The forum was attended by more than 120 people and drew extensive media coverage.

Canlis Restaurant – Fun anniversary promotion
Fine dining and the Library came together when the Canlis brothers hid a menu at the Central Library to promote the 50-year anniversary of the landmark restaurant. Local media filmed the brothers as they inserted the menu into the Dec. 11, 1950, issue of Time magazine and uploaded a clue to Canlis’ Facebook page and Twitter feed. The menu was discovered less than two hours later. The lucky winner received a dinner at Canlis at 1950s prices.
Summer Reading Program

A total of 12,214 patrons read 159,702 books and 10,227 patrons attended 171 programs as part of the 2010 Summer Reading Program.

Global Reading Challenge

Over 2,500 children from 45 Seattle Public Schools participated in this year’s citywide reading contest. Teams from Orca and Stevens elementary schools tied for first place. The Seattle Public Library now involves more than 70 percent of Seattle Public Schools’ fourth- and fifth-graders. Twenty-four Library branches and over 30 children’s librarians and support staff administer this program.

Seattle Reads

The 12th annual “Seattle Reads” featured “Secret Son” by Laila Lalami. Lalami made four branch appearances in addition to the main event at the Central Library. Book-It Repertory Theatre presented four performances of staged readings from “Secret Son.” A musician on oud (stringed instrument) and tabla (drum) accompanied the reading. Twenty-six Library-sponsored book groups read and discussed “Secret Son” — this was in addition to scores of private book groups who borrowed kits from the Library and individual readers all over the city.

Washington State Book Awards

The Washington Center for the Book at The Seattle Public Library recognized outstanding books published by Washington authors as part of the 2010 Washington State Book Awards. This was the 44th year of the program, formerly called the Governor’s Writers Awards.
Amazing libraries
For National Library Week, the Huffington Post did an online survey of what libraries people thought were the most amazing. The Central Library was in the top five.

Most important architecture since 1980
The Central Library was featured in Vanity Fair’s August issue on the most important pieces of architecture built since 1980. The article was based on a survey of 52 prominent architects and critics who were asked to name the most important pieces of architecture built in the last 30 years. Architect Rem Koolhaas and the Central Library ranked number five.

Lifetime achievement honor
The Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement for the 12th International Architecture Exhibition (Venice, Giardini and Arsenale, Aug. 29 — Nov. 21, 2010) was awarded to Central Library architect Rem Koolhaas. Seattle’s Central Library was noted as one of Koolhaas’ most important works.

Best of the Decade
Seattle magazine recognized the Central Library and Libraries for All in the Cityscape category in its “Best of the Decade” edition. Every fall, Seattle magazine looks back over the past year to name the “best of the best” and compiles its annual December “Best of” issue. The Library was excited to be named not only the best of the year, but honored for a decade’s worth of bests!

Literate city
An annual study conducted by Central Connecticut State University concluded that Seattle is the nation’s second most literate city. The study ranks the nation’s largest cities (population 250,000+) and focuses on six key indicators of literacy: newspaper circulation, number of bookstores, library resources, periodical publishing resources, educational attainment, and Internet resources.

Three branches turn 100
Three Carnegie libraries, the University, West Seattle and Green Lake branches, turned 100 in July. Birthday celebrations included live music and exhibits of vintage clothing and hats — including a bonnet from the pioneer days and a collapsible men’s hat designed to fit under a seat at the opera.
For people who love the Library, making a donation to The Seattle Public Library Foundation is the most significant way to help keep this vital resource available to everyone in our community. The Foundation helps the Library build its collection and resources, offer programs for patrons of all ages, and better serve the needs of our community. In 2010, The Seattle Public Library Foundation made grants to the Library totaling $6,353,000. Highlights include:

- Help Us Make $1 Million for the Library Campaign — An anonymous donor challenged the community to match a $500,000 gift to the Foundation. We completed the challenge in record time and added more than 2,400 new donors to the Foundation.

- Gifts from Legacy Donors — The Foundation received over $500,000 in bequests to support the Library. These came from donors who included the Foundation in their will or estate plan.

2010 Board of Directors

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Bob Carlile, treasurer
Ross Baker, secretary
Susan Adkins, immediate past president

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Ina Goodwin Tateuchi
Patricia Walker
Dave Williams
Catie Wilson
Irene Yamamoto

Susan Hildreth, city librarian
Jonna Ward, executive director
2010 Highlights

◆ The Friends of The Seattle Public Library donated $148,000 to the Library to support educational classes and learning initiatives for youth, including the Library’s Summer Reading Program.

◆ The Friends received the Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends, and Foundations (ALTAFF) Baker and Taylor Award and $1,000 for outstanding efforts in advocacy and community awareness around the impact of Library budget reductions.

◆ The Friends awarded vouchers to over 100 Seattle Public Schools teachers to use at the Friends’ Book Sales for purchasing books and materials for their classrooms. The Books for Teachers program is generously funded by the Renee B. Fisher Foundation.

2010 Board of Trustees

2010 Board Officers
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The Library Board completed a strategic planning process to help identify and plan for future needs. An 18-member advisory committee assisted the board. The board also received input from staff and the public through surveys, open houses, focus groups and two citywide forums: “Technology and Its Impact on the Future of Libraries,” and “The User Experience in the 21st Century Library.” New mission, vision and values statements were developed and five new strategic goals emerged from the process.

Our Vision for Seattle
A city where imagination and opportunity thrive.

Our Mission
The Seattle Public Library brings people, information and ideas together to enrich lives and build community.

Summary of Goals & Objectives
Fuel Seattle’s Passion for Reading, Personal Growth & Learning

- Build community around books
- Strengthen the Library’s contribution to the education of Seattle’s youth
- Be Seattle’s source for high-quality free instruction and programs to support personal growth
- Integrate learning into daily life

Expand Seattle’s Access to Information, Ideas & Stories

- Lead the nation in providing access to digital material
- Develop relevant and inspiring collections that meet Seattle’s evolving needs and expectations
- Drive new models for improving information access and delivery

Empower Seattle’s Distinctive Communities & Vibrant Neighborhoods

- Bring Library resources to where people are
- Establish the Library as a civic focal point and resource hub for Seattle’s communities
- Adapt spaces and services to support Seattle’s vibrant neighborhoods

Build Partnerships to Make a Difference in People’s Lives

- Deploy a systematic approach to partnering that best leverages Library and partner resources
- Create alliances with government agencies and community groups to benefit Seattle residents

Foster an Organizational Culture of Innovation

- Build Library staff and institutional capacity to innovate
- Use rigorous analysis to provide a positive user experience
- Manage change with flexibility
- Communicate and celebrate progress
Guiding Principles

Support intellectual freedom
The Seattle Public Library enables all individuals in our community to exercise their right to access constitutionally protected information.

Foster a healthy democracy
The Library is committed to building an informed community, and providing neutral ground where participation in civic life is open to all.

Promote literacy and a love of reading
Recognizing the vital importance of reading to open doors and expand horizons, the Library strives to support every patron in becoming a lifelong reader.

Support children and youth
We strive to join parents, educators and young people in helping to raise thoughtful readers and citizens. We recognize the priority of efforts to close educational achievement gaps.

Protect confidentiality of patron records
The Library respects the confidentiality of our patrons’ requests for information, the online sites they access, and their borrowing history.

Respect and embrace the entire community
We celebrate Seattle’s diversity and strive to ensure that all people feel welcome in the Library. We strive to meet the needs and expectations of every Library patron. The Seattle Public Library actively supports efforts that combat prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination.

Form strong partnerships
The Library extends its reach and impact in the community through partnerships with individuals, public and nonprofit agencies, community groups, educators and businesses.

Adapt and innovate
To stay relevant to patrons’ changing needs and interests, we continuously adapt what we do and how we do it. We are a learning organization and invest in our staff, technology, and infrastructure to improve service.
Facilities
Central Library, 26 neighborhood branches and Mobile Services.

Staffing
640 staff members (511.82 full-time equivalents)

2010 Circulation
Adult books: 3,806,372
Children’s books: 2,137,471
Media (DVDs, CDs, audiobooks): 5,199,449
Digital/downloadable media: 232,902
Total: 11,376,194

2010 Collection Size
Central Library: 1,057,369
Branches: 1,152,730
Virtual Library: 77,631
Total Collection Size: 2,287,730

2010 Patron Visits
Central Library (door count): 1,984,708
Branches (door count): 4,981,720
Virtual visits (internal and external website visits): 7,254,802
Total patron visits: 14,221,230

2010 Service Levels and Programs
1,075,608 reference questions answered (in person, phone, fax, mail, email, text, Live Help chat)
175,185 people attended 5,957 programs at the Central Library, neighborhood branches and Mobile Services
762,756 podcast downloads of Library programs

2010 Operating Budget
Personnel: $38,649,654
Books and Materials: $5,452,553
Maintenance, Security and Utilities: $1,847,306
Supplies: $293,438
Other: $3,804,989
Total: $50,047,940

Facebook fans:
5,137 fans added
Total: 9,119 fans

Event Services
Managing Central Library meeting facilities and building tours.

Meeting Rooms
414 private groups rented space and 11 photo shoots generated $163,059 in revenue
22 nonprofit groups used free meeting room spaces
399 public Library events and internal Library meetings
Total meetings supported: 835

Tours
1,900 people took public and private tours of the Central Library. More than 200 were visitors from outside the United States, including delegations from South Korea, Denmark, Germany, India, Japan, China and the Netherlands.

Volunteers
464 individuals contributed 18,764 volunteer service hours to the Library.