



Long Range Plan  
2010 – 2015

# Introduction

Over the past year, the Trustees of the Stowe Free Library have enlisted the help of the Stowe community and the Library staff to analyze the different aspects of services and facilities offered by the SFL in order to maintain, strengthen, and improve it.

Focus groups, questionnaires, and meetings, both with outside resources and the Trustees alone, have been the means employed to gather information. The Trustees have tried to be inclusive, inviting comments from both selected individuals and from the general public, but can only say for certain that everyone has been invited, not that all opinions have been expressed. However, ultimately it is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees, with the close and excellent assistance of the Library Director, to winnow the information gathered and to present a guide for the direction of the Library for the next five years.

Economic and social futures are never predictable with certainty but it is clear that the present economic climate is unusually unstable. This mandates that grand plans must be tabled in favor of a vision for the Library that is flexible and can be approached incrementally. We must keep the vision alive but be able to delineate the parts, which make the whole. As community support and funding allows, the parts must be promoted and implemented and, in time, the vision will become apparent.

This plan has deliberately steered away from firm pronouncements of goals coupled with timelines. The Trustees are aware funding is a key element in the success of any project and that they, and the Director, must be sensitive to the ability of the community to support the vision of the Library. The Trustees and Director will continue to advocate for the growth and enhancement of the Library but pushing for unrealistic goals can only lead to failure. So much good already exists within the walls of this Library and in the enthusiasm of the staff and patrons, and it is this positive capital that must be tapped to ensure the growth of the Stowe Free Library.

## **2009 Stowe Free Library Board of Trustees**

Dick Johannesen, Chair and Treasurer  
Nancy Stead, Secretary  
Jo Sabel Courtney  
Trisha Fong  
Meg Kauffman  
Frits Momsen  
Phyllis Thibault

## **2009 Stowe Free Library Director and Staff**

Stephanie Chase, Director  
Julie Pickett, Children's Librarian  
Megan Carder  
Mary Jane Crouse  
Molly Pease  
Marcia Smith  
Pete Smith

# Mission Statement

To welcome, to inspire, to enrich the mind.

# Vision

Stowe Free Library strives to be the primary community center, a portal to knowledge, opportunity, and diverse resources.

# Values

The Trustees and Staff of the Stowe Free Library value:

- maintaining and growing a vibrant, well-loved and well-used community center
- establishing an early and continuing love of reading and learning
- keeping pace with emerging technology
- maintaining a popular circulation collection driven primarily by user interests and requests
- an emphasis on customer service
- recognizing and encouraging a diversity of patrons, supporters, and volunteers from Stowe and beyond
- investing in the professional future of our staff to ensure a skilled and creative workforce
- developing web-based services for patrons beyond the library walls
- fostering collaboration with other organizations and groups for programs for our patrons
- fostering collaboration with state and national library groups for the success of the library
- Trustee advocacy

# Goals for 2010 – 2015

Through discussion, staff input, and patron surveys and focus groups, the Trustees have determined four areas of service at the Stowe Free Library on which to focus over the next five years:

- ❖ Programs and Services
- ❖ Technology
- ❖ The Library Collection
- ❖ Space Needs

Within these four areas, the following goals arise:

## **Programs and Services**

- ❖ Increase the presence of the Stowe Free Library in the community through partnerships and marketing opportunities
- ❖ Diversify programming choices for adults and children
- ❖ Revitalize the Library's volunteer program
- ❖ Promote staff continuing education and professional development

## **Technology**

- ❖ Create a comprehensive technology plan

## **The Library Collection**

- ❖ Meet the Vermont State Library standard of spending at least 15% of the Library's total budget spent on library materials
- ❖ Stay current with developing trends in format and in content, and provide assistance and instruction to access those new collections
- ❖ Ensure the Library's collection will be user-driven by constantly looking at statistics and surveying patrons
- ❖ Enhance services for children under 5 and their parents

## **Space Needs**

- ❖ Experiment with the present space use
- ❖ Provide more seating and meeting space
- ❖ Have a conceptual plan and project costs for expansion, in order to be ready for fundraising and building during a future 5 year cycle
- ❖ Expand space for children under 5 and their parents

## Implementation

Each year in September, the Board of Trustees and the Director, with input from the staff, will hold a planning meeting to determine the action items the Library will undertake in the upcoming fiscal year in order to further the goals set out in this Long Range Plan.

Mindful of community desires, the action items will be determined on an annual basis.

## Programs and Services

- ❖ Public Relations and Marketing
  - Web links with the *Stowe Reporter*, Stowe Area Association, and schools
  - *Stowe Reporter*: Weekly info notes, articles on special programs
  - Keep Library bulletin boards in lobbies current
- ❖ Explore feasibility of longer hours
- ❖ Continue to address needs of all age groups and abilities
- ❖ Support computer literacy of staff so they fulfill customer requests competently and give superior customer service
- ❖ Programming
  - Develop more age-specific children's programs at varied times of day
  - Develop more diverse adult programs at varied times
  - Provide diverse programs to attract non-current Library patrons
- ❖ Revitalize volunteer program with more education and support
- ❖ Work with schools and other groups
  - Develop clear communication with Stowe schools so the Library can better support their curriculum via Library services
  - Foster communication with Recreation Department and appropriate town committees to collaborate with and develop better after-school programming
  - Coordinate with other town groups to support their programs

## Technology

- ❖ Update 5 adult public access computers and 3 public access catalogue computers which are currently 5+ years old. Initially 8 computers should be part of a tech replacement plan, as designed by the SFL computer advisor. Of the 24 computers presently owned, at least 5 should be replaced per year.
- ❖ Add additional WiFi lines as need arises, to improve access.
- ❖ Add some express terminals with stand-up access, useful for short term projects, printing, etc.
- ❖ Add automatic sign-in computer access with time limits, as well as a pre-pay machine for printing
- ❖ Improve electrical outlets for public access at table top level, and add network wired access.
- ❖ Provide wireless printing for patrons to use from laptops

- ❖ Research a copy machine that accommodates a flash drive
- ❖ Provide a computer/home office center with a scanner
- ❖ Provide a drop-down ceiling-recessed projector for community room
- ❖ Add technology instruction to the programming budget
- ❖ Research various types of e-book readers
- ❖ Increase downloadable resources for patrons, adding music and video

## The Library Collection

- ❖ Increase our downloadable resources for patrons, adding music and video
- ❖ Assess new printed and electronic materials and update collection as needed
- ❖ Add current hardware or software along with how-to workshops for patrons
- ❖ Survey patrons annually to evaluate collection performance and needs
- ❖ Offer and evaluate new Pre-K programs

## Space Needs

- ❖ In the short term, explore reconfiguring the present space by moving reading room to meeting room space and reconfiguring children's space use, as an example
- ❖ Expanded collection space
- ❖ Additional seating areas
  - Younger age groups
  - Presentations, laptops, homework, story-hours
- ❖ Expand break and work areas for staff
- ❖ Quiet, larger adult reading room, separate from children's activities' area
- ❖ Standing kiosks for quick-access Internet computers, possibly near front foyer
  - Also relevant to Technology section
- ❖ Contract with a consultant to explore future expansion into the basement and into the space next to present periodical room

# Evaluation

The Board of Trustees will measure success in three ways:

- ❖ Through an annual patron survey, given in March or April, based on the goals of this Long Range Plan. Each year, the same survey will be given, in order to provide a baseline for changes and growth
- ❖ Through an annual Trustees meeting, in May or June, which will focus specifically on the work of the previous year and the results of the patron survey
- ❖ Through an annual Action Planning and Budget Committee meeting, in September, which will look at action items that:
  - ❖ need to be continued into the next fiscal year
  - ❖ while completed, may or may not set the stage for a new step
  - ❖ include projects or services to initiate or discontinue