



NEW CITY LIBRARY

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF NEW CITY, CONGERS AND BARDONIA

DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2015

The month of January was an inauspicious start to the year. On January 8, a coil inside an HVAC rooftop unit burst in single-digit temperatures. The library was closed for the day as water poured through the ceiling of the handicapped-accessible public restroom as well as the office of the head of adult services nearby. There were multiple closures, delayed openings, and early closings of the library throughout the month as winter storm after winter storm pounded the Northeast.

But once the weather settled, work could begin on the considerable list of physical improvements needed. The parking lights and exit signs in the building were fitted with LED bulbs for energy savings. The A/V renovation grant work was finally completed with the installation of the new furniture for the quiet study room. This room has been hugely successful in attracting patrons looking for a quiet place to work undisturbed by the hustle and bustle of our busy library.

The security surveillance system was enhanced by the addition of sixteen cameras and 2TB storage of video. Dozens of aged PCs and computer peripherals were purged from the "graveyard" in the basement and either donated to PC Renew (an organization that refurbishes PCs and peripherals so that they may be used by other nonprofits or for hardware instruction) or taken to the Rockland County Hazardous Waste facility in Pomona.

Two new boilers were installed to replace the existing units that were failing. The second circulating pump was refurbished. Trane was selected to service and maintain the complicated and sometimes petulant HVAC system: failed actuators and burst coils were repaired, anti-freeze was added to the system, and other work was performed in an effort to maximize the output of an outdated system.

A \$109,634 NYS Division of Library Development grant was awarded to the library to cover the boiler replacement as well as finance a major brick restoration project. The façade of the building as well as interior steelwork received much-needed rehabilitation.

RCLS technicians installed a new Dell PowerEdge R430 server and a Dell Sonicwall router in the LAN room. A Print Release Station was installed so that printing for patrons became more of a self-serve process. The individual black-and-white and color printers were

replaced with one networked printer/copier. This leased unit which had been used as a standalone copier allows duplex printing in both color and B&W and offers printing on legal-sized paper as well. Mobile printing was initiated, too, which allows patrons to send their print jobs from home or their device on the wi-fi to our networked printer without having to be physically connected to the network.

The strategic planning process conducted by Alan Burger of Library Development Solutions concluded in December. Focus groups consisting of staff, patrons, and board members yielded helpful and insightful information about the direction the library should be taking in the years to come. Surveys conducted online and on paper allowed anonymous and honest appraisal of our services, facilities, and staff. We received a general thumbs-up of approval but were also alerted to areas needing improvement. The plan was approved by the board at the December meeting, and we now have a “roadmap” to guide us in the following four years as we strive towards providing the best library service in the county.

One area of focus is providing more of the high-quality adult and youth programming the library is known for. The oral history *Share, Listen, Learn* program series begun this year drew patrons countywide to hear recordings of Rocklanders both extraordinary and ordinary. Some themes covered were: Growing Up in Rockland, Working in Rockland, and Veterans of Rockland. This program was awarded a \$1,000 Outreach grant from RCLS for providing special programming to target populations defined by the system.

Another significant programming development was the beginnings of a makerspace with the purchase of a 3D printer. The makerspace concept encourages and develops cooperative, creative learning in all kinds of media and materials. 3D printing is just one example but perhaps the most exciting. The kickoff drew dozens of patrons aged 8 to 80 who were eager to learn more about this fascinating process.

Perennial favorites such as the Big Band concert on Memorial Day and the Haunted Library at the end of October were enjoyed by many. Children’s services introduced a Sensory Storytime geared for kids on the autism spectrum. This program also earned a \$1,000 Outreach grant from RCLS. A Crazy 8s Math Club was started. A Family Fun Night was a hit for all ages who participated in a good, old-fashioned square dance. Literature on the Lawn was one of our first endeavors to encourage a “read anywhere” mindset in a communal, outdoors setting. A new book group started this year entitled, “He Said, She Said,” and its theme of biographies and memoirs has attracted solid attendance right off the bat.

The library participated in a worldwide event entitled *Hour of Code*. Online tutorials introduced kids to computer science who could work at their own pace and learn the process of coding. New City teen patrons fought valiantly in the annual Battle of the Books competition against other RCLS member library teams.

Three Chromebooks for inhouse use were added as an alternative to our public internet stations. They are showing good use by Clarkstown students working collaboratively on their Google Docs-based schoolwork. Children's services added Launchpads to their technological offerings. These pre-loaded tablets offer age-appropriate academic instruction in multiple subject areas.

The library once again hosted a successful Annual Blood Drive in September. And our presence was most welcome by attendees of the two New City Street Fairs held downtown.

Circulation trends continue to show less demand for physical materials and increased demand for digital works. Overdrive (e-books and digital audio) checkouts climbed as RCLS' member libraries agreed to pool resources and grow the digital budget to increase offerings to patrons. Zinio digital magazine database showed steady use. Circulation statistics will be available in the state Annual Report submitted in February 2016.

At the heart of any successful operation such as ours are the people. Nine staff members volunteered for CPR certification. The defibrillator donated to us long ago could now be hung confidently on the wall at the reference desk (never to be employed, it is hoped). Adult and teen volunteers were honored in April. At that same celebration, service pins were awarded to nine staff members reaching chronological milestones of service. A quarterly staff meeting in October covered fire safety and featured Judge Howard Gerber wearing his fireman's hat.

Trustee David Zuckerberg and staff members Shibu Abraham, Brian Jennings, and Marianne Silver attended the annual NYLA Advocacy Day in Albany in February.

Trustees Zuckerberg and Ralph Sabatini, and staff members Janet Makoujy, Brian Jennings, Veronica Reynolds, and the director attended the RCLS Legislative Breakfast in September.

Personnel changes included the addition of Kymberlee Grant as Page I, Travis Seward as Custodian I, Lori Salotto as Librarian I part-time, and Kelly Corrado as Administrative Assistant.

The library board continued to work cohesively with significant efforts and successes in building repair and maintenance, staff association contract negotiations, a completed strategic plan, the hiring of a new director, and a renewed focus on creating and updating policies.

December's budget vote was successful with a 72% approval. In the board trustee election, two-year Board President Victor Berger was re-elected for a second term, and new trustees Robert Axelrod and Agin Antony were elected to their first terms.

The library is under sound and steady governance as it heads into 2016. With a true sense of significant accomplishment, we can continue to move confidently in the direction of providing 21st-century library service to the members of the Clarkstown community.

Respectfully submitted,
Marianne Silver
January 21, 2016