

*Next Chapters Begin Here*



**Bucks County Free Library**  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**  
**FY2007 – 2011**

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## BUCKS COUNTY FREE LIBRARY LOCATIONS

### **Doylestown District Library Center**

**150 South Pine Street, Doylestown PA 18901**

Monday-Thursday 9-9, Friday-Saturday 9-5, Sunday 1-5

**215.348.9081**

### **Bensalem Branch**

**3700 Hulmeville Road, Bensalem, PA 19020**

Monday-Wednesday 10-9, Thursday and Saturday 10-5, Friday 1-5

**215.638.2030**

### **Levittown Branch**

**7311 New Falls Road, Levittown, PA 19055**

Monday-Thursday 10-9, Friday 1-5, Saturday 10-5

**215.949.2324**

### **James A. Michener Branch, Quakertown**

**401 West Mill Street, Quakertown, PA 18951**

Monday-Wednesday 10-9, Thursday and Saturday 10-5, Friday 1-5

**215.536.3306**

### **Pennwood Branch, Langhorne**

**301 South Pine Street, Route 413, Langhorne, PA 19047**

Monday-Wednesday 10-9, Thursday and Saturday 10-5, Friday 1-5

**215.757.2510**

### **Samuel Pierce Branch, Perkasie**

**491 Arthur Avenue Perkasie, PA 18944**

Monday-Wednesday 10-9, Thursday and Saturday 10-5, Friday 1-5

**215.257.9718**

### **Yardley-Makefield Branch**

**1080 Edgewood Road, Yardley, PA 19067**

Monday-Wednesday 10-9, Thursday and Saturday 10-5, Friday 1-5

**215.493.9020**



## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Dear Reader,

Congratulations to the community representatives, the library trustees, and the library staff who gave their time and talent along with consultant June Garcia as she guided us forward to create a new strategic plan for Bucks County Free Library. With an emphasis on identifying service priorities, we worked tirelessly for many months to produce the final plan included here.

Providing exemplary library service to library users in Bucks County has always been a priority for library service. From the youngest library user to those in retirement years, this plan will ensure that we realize the service needs of each citizen in Bucks County.

Libraries have changed greatly over the years, but the commitment of all those individuals who provide library service in their communities remains putting the customer first.

Sincere thanks go to all those involved who worked diligently to create this plan, and to those who work in our libraries each day to bring excellent service to our communities. We feel confident that this plan will help us to face the challenges as we move forward in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Sincerely,

Joan Bowman, President

Bucks County Free Library Board of Trustees

## INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A **Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA)** grant from the federal government, awarded and administered by Commonwealth Libraries of Pennsylvania, funded a significant part of this project.

In addition to the Bucks County Free Library system of seven branch libraries, several independent but related public libraries in Bucks County participated in selected planning and training sessions made possible by this grant. Those libraries include the Free Library of New Hope and Solebury, the Free Library of Northampton Township, the Margaret R. Grundy Memorial Library, the Riegelsville Public Library, the Southampton Free Library, the Township Library of Lower Southampton, the Village Library of Wrightstown, and the Warminster Township Free library.

Consultant **June Garcia** guided community members, library staff, and trustees throughout strategic planning. She shared information, knowledge, and wisdom that will dramatically increase our capacity for success in delivering quality library services as effectively and efficiently as possible.

**Community Planning Committee** members devoted hours of time and expertise during three meetings, identifying key directions for libraries to consider in the larger context of community needs, expectations, and trends.

The **Township Library of Lower Southampton** (Feasterville) hosted Community Planning Committee meetings on behalf of all public libraries participating in the project. **Hank Carroll**, Lower Southampton board president, participated as a member of the Community Planning Committee. **Sally Pollock**, Lower Southampton library director, coordinated arrangements with Lower Southampton library staff.

The **Warminster Township Library** hosted related training sessions. **Caroline Gallis**, Warminster library director, coordinated arrangements with Warminster library staff and participated as an observer at Community Planning Committee meetings.

**Mary Pellak**, of **Pellak Consulting Network**, assisted in leading staff brainstorming sessions on organizational values and assisted Bucks County Free Library management in determining how best to incorporate strategic planning concerns into employee training and staff development plans.

**Bucks County Free Library board members Det Ansinn and Roberta Foerst** represented the Bucks County Free Library as observers at Community Planning Committee meetings.

**Community public library trustees, directors, and staff** added insight and direction to meetings, training sessions, and discussions we shared as colleagues and partners in analyzing information and coming to decisions about planning for quality library services for Bucks County Free Library and local library constituents.

**Bucks County Free Library department and branch staff** contributed thoughts and ideas during every phase of strategic planning, and will ultimately fulfill the promise of this plan.

## **1. 2008 BUCKS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

James F Cawley, Esq., Chairman

Charles H. Martin, Vice-Chairman

Diane M. Ellis-Marseglia, LCSW

## **2. 2007/2008 BUCKS COUNTY FREE LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Joan Bowman, President

Detlev D. Ansinn, Jr., Vice President

Gerald L. Balchis, Treasurer

Roberta Foerst, Secretary

William P. Draper

Mary Ann Beltz

Steven C. Dilliplane

### 3. COMMUNITY PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Sharon Barker**

United Way

**David P. Boscola**

Bucks County Deputy Finance Director

**Joseph Ciambrello**

Bristol Borough Community Partnership

**Catherine Edwards**

Teen Library Volunteer

**Elizabeth Graver**

Penridge Chamber of Commerce

**Hal Marcovitz**

Freelance Writer

**Brooke Moran**

Area Agency on Aging

**Stephanie Sides**

Family Services Association of Bucks County

**Patty Smallacombe**

United Way

**Jim Wilson**

Quakertown Alive/Kiwanis

**Dan Bates**

Business Marketing Alliance

**Lynn Bush**

Bucks County Planning Commission

**Vincent J. Deon**

Northampton Township Supervisor

**Joseph Golden**

Upper Southampton Township Manager

**Jacqueline L. Liney**

Children's Cultural Center

**Geoffrey Meek**

Bucks County Resident

**Charles Morton**

Teacher, Bensalem School District

**Zoriana Siokola**

Michener Art Museum

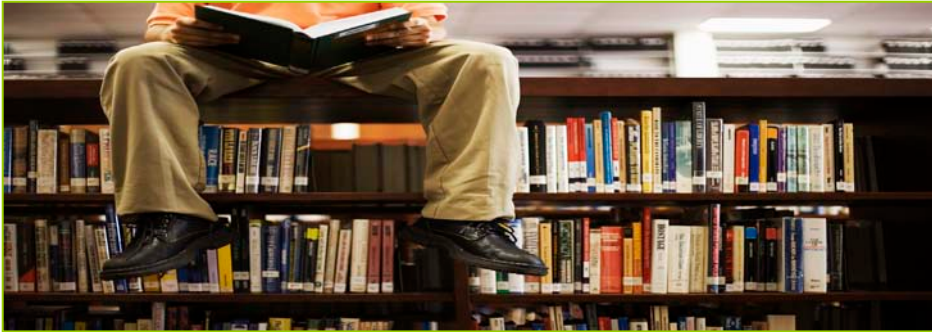
**Krysti Spadea**

Teen Library Volunteer

**Linda Wolfson**

VITA Education Services

#### 4. CONTRIBUTING BUCKS COUNTY FREE LIBRARY STAFF



The following Bucks County Free Library staff served in special roles as leaders and facilitators during strategic planning:

**Sue Ziegler** (Public Services Director), **Janet Marnatti** (Collection Management Director), and **Dianne Malvosio** (Youth Services Consultant) assisted in compiling, reviewing, and analyzing statistical and operational information in order to help set target goals; and facilitated formal and informal discussion sessions with library staff on various facets of strategic planning.

**Chris Snyder** (Technical Services Manager), **Holly Ambrose** (Collection Management Coordinator and Teen Services Committee Chair), and **Jan O'Rourke** (District Consultant) facilitated SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis sessions with library staff. **Chris Snyder** additionally assisted with editing the final strategic plan document.

**Javier Lanchang** (System Services Director), **Mike Schabert** (Information Technology Manager), and **Steven Prekup** (Server Technician) provided technology and print production support.

**Joe Thompson** (Facilities Manager), **Mike Zehender** (Custodian), and **Bob Ross** (Custodian) assisted with special travel arrangements and room setups.

**Chuck Wendig** (District Services Assistant) provided graphic design support and assisted with organizational values sessions.

**Diane Davis** (Branch Librarian) compiled information about library activities and served as an activities analysis discussion leader.

**JoAnn Kern** (Assistant Branch Librarian) and **Darcy Fair** (Assistant Branch Librarian) edited and wrote the final version of the values statement.

**Pam Riley** (Executive Assistant) ensured that all arrangements for meetings and training sessions were in order and that all phases of strategic planning would flow smoothly.

**Martina Kominiarek** (Executive Director) recognized the importance of a formal planning process, wrote the grant for the project, encouraged and supported the board and staff in their efforts, and wrote the final strategic plan document.

## VALUES STATEMENT

Values are principles and standards that library staff and board members use to guide their actions and decisions. Values are universal and apply to all of library operations, beyond the library's current service priorities and goals. Our values are the foundation of our organizational culture.

Library staff, working with organizational development specialist Mary Pellak in three brainstorming sessions, developed material for a values statement that comprehensively describes and summarizes the library's values. The values statement additionally points to how we apply those values both internally and externally.

With the adoption of the strategic plan, the Bucks County Free Library Board adopted the following values:



*We support intellectual freedom and free access to information.*

*We honor diversity and treat everyone with respect.*

*We use our human, physical, and financial resources efficiently and effectively.*

*We believe the best service is friendly, prompt, and accurate.*

*We welcome all library users to accessible physical and virtual environments.*

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Bucks County Free Library Board of Trustees and staff are committed to providing outstanding service to the residents of Bucks County. To guide us in that effort, we began a strategic planning process to pinpoint community needs and service priorities. June García, a library consultant, helped facilitate the process.

Members of the Community Planning Committee came together to discuss what Bucks County could and should be like, and discussed why residents of Bucks County are proud to call this county their home. Once the committee articulated this vision, they then discussed what would be necessary to turn the vision into a reality and what the Bucks County Free Library could do to contribute to the realized vision.

The Community Planning Committee recommended that the Board adopt the following six service priorities for the period of 2008-2011:

### **Visit a Comfortable Space: Physical and Virtual Spaces**

Everyone will have safe, attractive and welcoming spaces to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read.

### **Create Young Readers: Early Literacy**

Young children (ages five and under) will have programs and services designed so that they will enter school ready to read, write and listen.

### **Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing and Listening for Pleasure**

Children (ages 6-11) and teens (ages 12 and older) will have materials and programs that stimulate their imaginations and provide pleasurable reading, viewing and listening experiences. Adults, too, will have timely access to a variety of new and popular materials.

### **Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning; Succeed in School: Homework Help; and Learn to Read and Write: Adult, Teen, and Family Literacy**

Children (ages 6-11) and teens (ages 12 and older) will have the books, media and electronic resources they need to satisfy their curiosity, explore topics of personal interest, and help them succeed in school. Adults, too, will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.

## **Be an Informed Citizen: Local, National and World Affairs**

Adults will have the information they need to support and promote democracy; to fulfill their civic responsibilities at the local, state and national levels; and to fully participate in community decision-making.

## **Understand How to Find, Evaluate and Use Information: Information Fluency**

Adults will have convenient and timely access to services and programs that help them find, evaluate and use information effectively.

After careful analysis by staff and thoughtful discussion, the library board adopted the service priorities recommended by the Community Planning Committee.

Library staff, working with June Garcia, developed nine goals that identified the benefits community residents will receive through the library's offered collections, programs and services, all of which serve and support the library's new service priorities. The goals, adopted by the Library Board for 2008-2011, are as follows:

**Goal 1.** Everyone will have attractive, safe, and welcoming places to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read. (Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical and Virtual Spaces)

**Goal 2.** Young children (ages five and under) will have programs and services designed so that they will enter school ready to read, write, and listen. (Create Young Readers: Early Literacy)

**Goal 3.** Children (ages 6-11) will have materials and programs that stimulate their imaginations and provide pleasurable reading, viewing, and listening experiences. (Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure)

**Goal 4.** Children (ages 6-11) and teens (ages 12 and older) will have the books, media, and electronic resources they need to satisfy their curiosity, explore topics of personal interest, and help them succeed in school. (Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning and Succeed in School: Homework Help)

**Goal 5.** Teens (ages 12 and older) will have materials and programs that respond to their current interests and provide pleasurable reading, viewing, and listening experiences. (Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure)

**Goal 6.** Adults will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives. (Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning and Learn to Read and Write: Adult, Teen and Family Literacy)

**Goal 7.** Adults will have timely access to a variety of new and popular materials. (Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure)

**Goal 8.** Adults will have the information they need to support and promote democracy, to fulfill their civic responsibilities at the local, state, and national levels, and to fully participate in community decision making. (Be an Informed Citizen: Local, National, and World Affairs)

**Goal 9.** Adults will have convenient and timely access to services and programs that help them find, evaluate, and use information effectively. (Understand How to Find, Evaluate, and Use Information: Information Fluency)



A list of the types of specific activities that will support these goals begins on page 19 of this document.

The Bucks County Free Library recognizes it is important not just to aim for success, but also to provide means and methods of measuring that success. The library board monitors all progress on a regular basis. The board has adopted aggressive ways of measuring progress, and these will determine:

- The number of users who participate in or use various services.
- The percent of users who indicate on a survey that the Bucks County Free Library has met their needs. This opinion might be about the quality of service, the value of the service, the user's satisfaction with the service, or the impact of the service.
- The number of units of service (items circulated, hits on a web page, etc.)

Library staff, management and the board recognize that it may be necessary to reallocate existing resources (staff, budget, space within facilities, technology) in support of these service priorities. All have publicly stated their commitment to do so when necessary.

Bucks County Free Library's service goals provide direct benefit to community residents. The library also adopted organizational competencies as a result of library management's analysis of what the library must do in order to improve our ability to provide the desired services articulated in the service goals. These capacities include external partnerships, fundraising, governance, marketing and public relations, measurement and evaluation, operational efficiencies, organizational structure, policies, and training and staff development. A list of the types of specific initiatives that will support these competencies begins on page 24 of this document.

The board and staff look forward to working collaboratively with Bucks County residents, governments, and community organizations to achieve the many goals the plan outlines. We are certain that, working together, we can transform the Bucks County Free Library into one that all community residents value and recognize as a model of excellence throughout our state and nation.

# COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

## I. OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

### *Planning to Plan*

The Bucks County Free Library Board of Trustees and management contracted with June Garcia to use a library-specific planning process developed by noted library professional and consultant Sandra Nelson. Full information about this unique and proven library planning process is available in the most recent edition of Nelson's work, *Strategic Planning for Results*.

The strategic planning process is based on three key assumptions, which the Bucks County Free Library board and management believe to be true:

**Excellence must be defined locally. It results when library services match community needs, interests and priorities.**

**Excellence is possible for both small and large libraries. It rests more on commitment than on unlimited resources.**

**Excellence is a moving target. Even when achieved, excellence must be continually maintained and the bar raised. If you are coasting, the only way you can go is downhill.**

### *Community Planning Committee*

Based on suggestions from library staff and other community stakeholders, the Bucks County Free Library board appointed twenty carefully selected local residents to serve on the Community Planning Committee. The board intended the makeup of this committee to reflect the diversity of Bucks County in all its dimensions: age, race, ethnicity, gender, occupation, and residential area. The names of the individuals who gave of their time and expertise to assist in this important endeavor can be found on page 6 of this document.

The Community Planning Committee served in an advisory capacity to the Bucks County Free Library. During two five-hour meetings led by June Garcia, they identified a vision for the future of Bucks County, described the current conditions, and proscribed the path necessary to bridge present conditions with the vision of the county's future. Their assessment of the current conditions in the county can be found in Appendix A of this document; and the vision they created can be found in Appendix B.

Committee members carefully considered a variety of services that public libraries could provide to help meet the needs and move the community toward the identified vision. After thoughtful discussion and deliberation, they recommended that the Bucks County Free Library adopt the following service priorities for the period of 2008-2011:

### **Visit a Comfortable Space: Physical and Virtual Spaces**

Everyone will have safe, attractive and welcoming spaces to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read.

### **Create Young Readers: Early Literacy**

Young children (ages five and under) will have programs and services designed so that they will enter school ready to read, write and listen.

### **Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing and Listening for Pleasure**

Children (ages 6-11) and teens (ages 12 and older) will have materials and programs that stimulate their imaginations and provide pleasurable reading, viewing and listening experiences. In addition, adults will have timely access to a variety of new and popular materials.

### **Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning and Succeed in School: Homework Help; and Learn to Read and Write: Adult, Teen, and Family Literacy**

Children (ages 6-11) and teens (ages 12 and older) will have the books, media and electronic resources they need to satisfy their curiosity, explore topics of personal interest, and help them succeed in school. Adults, too, will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.

### **Be an Informed Citizen: Local, National and World Affairs**

Adults will have the information they need to support and promote democracy; to fulfill their civic responsibilities at the local, state and national levels; and to fully participate in community decision-making.

### **Understand How to Find, Evaluate and Use Information: Information Fluency**

Adults will have convenient and timely access to services and programs that help them find, evaluate and use information effectively.



## II. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

After the Bucks County Free Library Board endorsed the service priorities in concept, June Garcia and library staff developed goals and objectives for the Bucks County Free Library branch system. Goals state the benefit that Bucks County residents (or a target population of those residents such as children, teens or adults) will receive because the library provides a specific service response.

At least three objectives support each goal and seek to provide the goal with more specific directives. Objectives are measurable, held against the following standards of success:

- The number of users who participate in or use various services.
- The percent of users who indicate on a survey that the Bucks County Free Library has met their needs. This opinion might be about the quality of service, the value of the service, the user's satisfaction with the service, or the impact of the service.
- The number of units of service (items circulated, hits on a web page, etc.).

The following goals and objectives reflect the service priorities recommended by the Community Planning Committee. **The goals are listed in order of target audience.** Those listed first apply to all residents, and are followed by the goals for audiences based on age, in chronological order. If two goals serve the same target audience, they are listed in alphabetical order by the service response.

### **1. Everyone will have attractive, safe, and welcoming places to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read. (Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical and Virtual Spaces)**

- 1.1: By FY2011, the attendance at library facilities will increase from 1,193,202 (FY2007) to 1,376,000.
- 1.2: By FY2011, the number of registered borrowers will increase from 239,310 (FY2007) to 295,000.
- 1.3: By FY2011, the number of items checked out at library facilities will increase from 2,343,706 (FY2007) to 2,536,870.
- 1.4: By FY2011, the number of hits on the library's web site will increase from 928,794 (FY2007) to 1.1 million.
- 1.5: By FY2011, 75% of web site users surveyed will rate the library's web site as informative and easy to use.
- 1.6: Annually, people will have a minimum of 210,000 sessions of use on library-provided Internet access computers.

- 1.7: By FY2011, the number of people who connect to the Internet via the Library's Wi-Fi access will increase from 1,363 (FY 2006/2007) to 12,500.
- 1.8: By FY2011, the number of community groups using the library as a meeting place will increase from 340 (FY2007) to 450.
- 1.9: Annually, a minimum of 2,000 meetings or programs sponsored by groups other than the library will be held in library facilities.
- 1.10: By FY2011, 90% of library visitors will indicate that the library was an attractive, safe, and welcoming place.

**2. Young children (ages five and under) will have programs and services designed so that they will enter school ready to read, write, and listen. (Create Young Readers: Early Literacy)**

- 2.1: By FY2011, the circulation of easy books will increase from 317,279 (FY2007) to 360,000.
- 2.2: By FY2011, a minimum of 12,000 young children will annually attend a program in the library.
- 2.3: By FY2011, a minimum of 9,300 young children will annually attend a program at a non-library location.
- 2.4: By FY2011, a minimum of 1,000 young children will participate in the Summer Reading Program annually.
- 2.5: By FY2011, a minimum of 75% of parents and caregivers surveyed will indicate that the library's services for young children are very good or excellent.
- 2.6: By FY2011, the circulation of Library on the Go bags will increase from 111 (FY2007) to 600.
- 2.7: By FY2011, young children will use Early Learning Station computers 88,500 hours annually.
- 2.8: Annually, a minimum of 2,500 people will attend an Early Literacy training session.

**3. Children (ages 6-11) will have materials and programs that stimulate their imaginations and provide pleasurable reading, viewing, and listening experiences. (Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure)**

- 3.1: By FY2011, the circulation of juvenile fiction will increase from 181,201 (FY2007) to 205,000.
- 3.2: By FY2011, the circulation of juvenile media (CDs, videos, DVDs, etc.) will increase from 190,557 (FY2007) to 205,000.

- 3.3: Annually, a minimum of 25,700 children will attend a library sponsored or co-sponsored program designed to stimulate their imagination.
- 3.4: By FY2011, a minimum of 6,000 children will annually participate in the Summer Reading Program.

**4. Children (ages 6-11) and teens (ages 12 and older) will have the books, media, and electronic resources they need to satisfy their curiosity, explore topics of personal interest, and help them succeed in school. (Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning and Succeed in School: Homework Help)**

- 4.1: By FY2011, the circulation of juvenile non-fiction will be at least 120,000 items per year.
- 4.2: Annually, a minimum of 4,000 parents and/or teachers will attend presentations made by library staff that describe and promote the library's homework help services.
- 4.3: By FY2011, a minimum of 75% of students surveyed will indicate that the resources the library provided to help them with homework assignments were very good or excellent.

**5. Teens (ages 12 and older) will have materials and programs that respond to their current interests and provide pleasurable reading, viewing, and listening experiences. (Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure)**

- 5.1: By FY2011, the circulation of young adult materials (fiction and non-fiction) will increase from 62,455 (FY2007) to 73,000.
- 5.2: By FY2011, a minimum of 75% of teens surveyed will indicate that they found something good to read, listen to, or view at the library.
- 5.3: Annually, a minimum of 3,200 teens (ages 12 – 19) will attend a library sponsored or co-sponsored program.
- 5.4: Annually, a minimum of 75% of teens attending a library sponsored or co-sponsored program will evaluate the program as very good or excellent.
- 5.5: By FY2011, the number of teens participating in the Summer Reading Program will increase from 200 (FY2007) to 2,100.

**6. Adults will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives. (Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning and Learn to Read and Write: Adult, Teen and Family Literacy)**



6.1: Annually, the circulation of adult non-fiction will be at least 320,000.

6.2: By FY2011, a minimum of 85% of adults surveyed who were looking for information or materials to explore a topic of personal interest will indicate the library's collection was very good or excellent.

6.3: By FY2011, a minimum of 75% of adults who attended a program at the library will evaluate the program as very good or excellent.

6.4: Annually, a minimum of 1,000 tutoring sessions will take place at the library.

6.5: By FY2011, the circulation of literacy materials for teens and adults (all formats) will increase from 465 (FY2007) to 2,000 items per year.

**7. Adults will have timely access to a variety of new and popular materials. (Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure)**

7.1: By FY2011, the circulation of adult fiction will increase from 602,857 (FY2007) to 620,000.

7.2: By FY2011, the circulation of adult media (CDs, videos, DVDs etc.) will increase from 546,885 (FY2007) to 566,000.

7.3: By FY2011, the circulation of non-English language materials for adults (all formats) will be at least 2,000 items per year.

7.4: By FY2011, a minimum of 85% of adults surveyed will indicate that they found something good to read, listen to, or view at the library.

7.5: By FY2011, a minimum of 75% of adults surveyed will indicate that they received the material they reserved in a timely manner.

**8. Adults will have the information they need to support and promote democracy, to fulfill their civic responsibilities at the local, state, and national levels, and to fully participate in community decision making. (Be an Informed Citizen: Local, National, and World Affairs)**

- 8.1: Annually, a minimum of 700 adults will attend programs related to local, national, or world affairs.
- 8.2: By FY2011, a minimum of 75% of adults who attended a library sponsored or co-sponsored “Be an Informed Citizen” program will evaluate the program as very good or excellent.
- 8.3: Annually, the number of hits on the library’s “Be an Informed Citizen” web page will be at least 6,000.
- 8.4: By FY2011, a minimum of 75% of people surveyed who used the “Be an Informed Citizen” web page will indicate that it was very good or excellent.

**9. Adults will have convenient and timely access to services and programs that help them find, evaluate, and use information effectively. (Understand How to Find, Evaluate, and Use Information: Information Fluency)**

- 9.1: Annually, a minimum of 1,500 people will attend a library sponsored presentation on electronic resources or computer skills training.
- 9.2: By FY2011, 75 % of people attending a library sponsored presentation on electronic resources or computer skills training will evaluate the class as very good or excellent.
- 9.3: Annually, the number of hits on the library’s “Information Fluency” web page will be at least 12,000.
- 9.4: By FY2011, a minimum of 75% of people surveyed who used the “Information Fluency” web page will indicate that it was very good or excellent.

### III. ACTIVITIES

Activities are the actions taken by staff to meet the goals in the library's strategic plan. An activity may support several objectives under a single goal, or support more than one goal in a strategic plan.

In response to the goals and objectives, work teams of library staff and managers, trained by June Garcia, reviewed the services the library was currently offering to determine whether they were supportive of the new service priorities. Work teams identified current activities, determined if the activities were effective in reaching intended audiences, identified possible modifications to improve effectiveness; reconfirmed the value and importance of some; determined that some could or should be eliminated, and identified new activities that would be more effective in meeting new goals and reaching intended audiences.

#### **1. Everyone will have attractive, safe, and welcoming places to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read. (Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical and Virtual Spaces)**

- Merchandise print and nonprint collections at every opportunity by providing age-appropriate and user-friendly book displays, signs, book lists, library talks, and book talks
- Maintain clean, safe, attractive, and up-to-date facilities
- Offer in-library and outreach programs and services for all ages that directly enhance, complement, and point to the library's collections and resources
- Merchandise all technology and electronic services and resources, including in-building Wi-Fi access and use of My Account for borrower services
- Offer in-library and outreach Reader's Advisory (recommended reading) resources and services for all ages in a variety of print and electronic formats
- Create user-friendly spaces for different purposes and age groups
- Promote library card registration in-library and offsite at every opportunity
- Redesign the web site
- Conduct customer satisfaction surveys in-library, during outreach, and electronically at every opportunity, including at the point-of-use of specific materials and program attendance, as well as ongoing general satisfaction
- Regularly solicit library user feedback on services and materials by providing in-person and electronic suggestion boxes

**2. Young children (ages five and under) will have programs and services designed so that they will enter school ready to read, write, and listen. (Create Young Readers: Early Literacy)**

- Strengthen and merchandise print and nonprint easy collections for young children and their caregivers
- Develop and merchandise new collection of online e-books for young children
- Create Early Learning resource areas, such as information displays or kiosks
- Create child-friendly, family-friendly spaces with programs such as Family Place and by incorporating developmental toys for learning play into children's areas and programs
- Provide and promote Early Learning Stations (preschool computers with educational software)
- Offer in-library and outreach Early Learning programs to parents and caregivers
- Co-sponsor in-library and outreach programs and services with other agencies such as the Quality Child Care Coalition, Head Start, and Pre-K Counts
- Offer Read-to-Me Summer Reading Program equally focusing on online and in-person participation
- Provide and promote Library on the Go Bags to early childhood educators
- Incorporate Early Learning practices into all story times to teach and model techniques parents and caregivers can use at home
- Participate in outreach events, such as community festivals, church fairs, neighborhood fun days, school fairs, and health fairs
- Consider creating and promoting an Early Learning web page
- Consider developing a comprehensive newborn program, such as Born to Read

**3. Children (ages 6-11) will have materials and programs that stimulate their imaginations and provide pleasurable reading, viewing, and listening experiences. (Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure)**

- Strengthen and merchandise print and nonprint fiction collections for children
- Create child-friendly, family-friendly spaces that include child-sized furniture and furniture for families to share

- Offer in-library and outreach children's programs and services that directly enhance, complement, and point to the library's collections and resources
- Co-sponsor in-library and outreach programs and services with other agencies, such as the Bucks County Intermediate Unit (Reading Olympics), CB Cares, scouts, museums, parks and recreation departments, 4-H, and nature centers
- Offer Summer Reading Program for children, equally focusing on online and in-person participation
- Participate in outreach events, such as community festivals, church fairs, neighborhood fun days, school fairs, and health fairs

**4. Children (ages 6-11) and teens (ages 12 and older) will have the books, media, and electronic resources they need to satisfy their curiosity, explore topics of personal interest, and help them succeed in school. (Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning and Succeed in School: Homework Help)**

- Strengthen and merchandise print and nonprint non-fiction collections for children and teens
- Offer in-library and outreach homework resources orientations for children, teens, caregivers, and teachers, such as PTA/PTO groups, Back-to-School nights, and in-service days
- Consider creating and promoting a Homework Help web page, incorporating Power Library and Ask Here PA as recommended resources

**5. Teens (ages 12 and older) will have materials and programs that respond to their current interests and provide pleasurable reading, viewing, and listening experiences. (Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure)**

- Provide opportunities, such as Teen Advisory Boards, for teens to actively participate in all library planning and decision-making that involves teen materials, services, and spaces
- Strengthen and merchandise print and nonprint teen collections
- Involve teens in creating teen-friendly physical and electronic spaces
- Offer in-library and outreach teen programs and services that directly enhance, complement, and point to the library's collections and resources

- Co-sponsor in-library and outreach programs and services with other agencies such as Central Bucks Healthier Communities Team and Bucks County Intermediate Unit
- Offer Summer Reading Program for teens, equally focusing on online and in-person participation
- Sponsor opportunities for teens to create and share original content, equally focusing on online and in-person participation
- Provide volunteer opportunities for teens that meet their developmental needs and benefit the library

**6. Adults will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives. (Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning and Learn to Read and Write: Adult, Teen and Family Literacy)**

- Strengthen and merchandise print and nonprint non-fiction and literacy collections for adults
- Offer in-library and outreach adult programs and services that directly enhance, complement, and point to the library's collections and resources
- Co-sponsor in-library and outreach programs and services with other agencies, such as VITA, CB Cares, parks and recreation departments, senior centers, churches, hospitals, historical societies, and cultural organizations
- Participate in outreach events, such as community festivals, church fairs, neighborhood fun days, school fairs, and health fairs
- Consider creating and promoting a Readers Advisory (recommended reading) web page

**7. Adults will have timely access to a variety of new and popular materials. (Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure)**

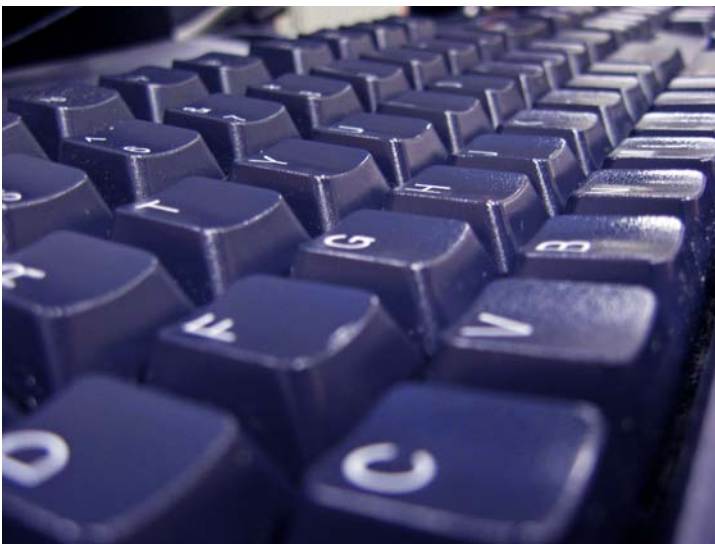
- Strengthen and merchandise print and nonprint popular materials collections for adults
- Participate in outreach events, such as community festivals, church fairs, neighborhood fun days, school fairs, and health fairs
- Consider creating and promoting a Readers Advisory (recommended reading) web page
- Offer recreational adult reading programs similar to Summer Reading for children

**8. Adults will have the information they need to support and promote democracy, to fulfill their civic responsibilities at the local, state, and national levels, and to fully participate in community decision making. (Be an Informed Citizen: Local, National, and World Affairs)**

- Co-sponsor in-library and outreach programs and services with other agencies
- Offer in-library and outreach adult programs and services that directly enhance, complement, and point to the library's collections and resources
- Create and promote an Informed Citizen web page

**9. Adults will have convenient and timely access to services and programs that help them find, evaluate, and use information effectively. (Understand How to Find, Evaluate, and Use Information: Information Fluency)**

- Co-sponsor in-library and outreach programs and services with other agencies, such as local chambers of commerce and senior centers
- Present in-library and outreach adult programs that directly enhance, complement, and point to the library's collections and resources
- Participate in outreach events, such as community festivals, church fairs, neighborhood fun days, school fairs, and health fairs
- Create and promote an Information Fluency web page



## IV. ORGANIZATIONAL COMPETENCIES AND INITIATIVES

Bucks County Free Library's service goals provide direct benefit to community residents. Organizational competencies are the result of library management's analysis of what the library must do in order to improve our ability to provide the desired services articulated in the service goals. These institutional capacities and efficiencies cover nine key areas:

- External partnerships
- Fundraising
- Governance
- Marketing and public relations
- Measurement and evaluation
- Operational efficiencies
- Organizational structure
- Policies
- Training and staff development

### **Organizational Competency 1: External Partnerships**

The Bucks County Free Library will actively seek partnerships with organizations and institutions to enable the library to better serve its customers and achieve its service goals.

**Initiative 1.1:** By March 1, 2009, develop and distribute criteria that will be used to assess partnerships and partnership opportunities.

**Initiative 1.2:** By March 1, 2009, initiate a review and approval process for the establishment of new partnerships.

**Initiative 1.3:** Annually identify and evaluate current partnerships and the obligations that the library has as part of those partnerships, as well as the corresponding benefits to library users.

### **Organizational Competency 2: Fundraising**

The Bucks County Free Library will partner with the Board of Trustees and the Friends of the Library to provide the finances necessary to support and enhance library services.

**Initiative 2.1:** By December 1, 2009, determine the parameters within which any library fundraising would need to be conducted.

**Initiative 2.2:** By June 1, 2010, develop a multi-year Fundraising Plan for operating and capital needs that address public funding needs as well as opportunities and strategies for private funding from sources such as grants and fundraising.

**Initiative 2.3:** By December 1, 2009, develop and implement a Friends of the Library policy.

### **Organizational Competency 3: Governance**

The Board of Trustees of the Bucks County Free Library will operate in an efficient, effective, and transparent manner.

**Initiative 3.1:** By January 1, 2009, revise board bylaws to support the mission of the library and to provide a framework within which the board will exercise its legal responsibilities.

**Initiative 3.2:** By January 1, 2009, review board committee structure and appoint committees, as needed, to support the accomplishment of the library's strategic plan.

**Initiative 3.3:** By December 1, 2009, develop and implement a board recruitment and training plan.

### **Organizational Competency 4: Marketing and Public Relations**

The Bucks County Free Library will promote library services through a variety of print, electronic and media opportunities.

**Initiative 4.1:** By January 1, 2009, develop and distribute a Marketing Plan that will support the library in its efforts to accomplish the goals in the strategic plan.

**Initiative 4.2:** By June 1, 2009, determine which library publications should be published in languages other than English.

**Initiative 4.3:** By January 1, 2009, adopt a mission statement and/or tag line that reflect the library's service priorities.

**Initiative 4.4:** By June 1, 2009, establish criteria that will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the library's marketing and/or public relations efforts.

### **Organizational Competency 5: Measurement and Evaluation**

The Bucks County Free Library will incorporate measurement and evaluation into its operational practices.

**Initiative 5.1:** By December 1, 2008, review process by which library use data is collected, compiled, and distributed; and revise process as necessary to provide relevant management data.

**Initiative 5.2:** By January 1, 2009, develop methodology to regularly update the library board on progress on all objectives included in the strategic plan.

**Initiative 5.3:** By January 1, 2009, develop methodology to count the number of questions of various types asked by library users.

**Initiative 5.4:** By December 31, 2009, review statistical report options available from the SIRSI system and develop procedures to regularly produce and distribute reports that will assist with collection management and enable the library to monitor the objectives in the strategic plan.

**Initiative 5.5:** By January 1, 2009, develop and implement procedures to regularly purge the patron and bibliographic databases.

**Initiative 5.6:** By December 1, 2009, develop and implement systems for in-person and electronic surveys of library users to regularly generate information that will assist the library in monitoring customer satisfaction.

### **Organizational Competency 6: Operational Efficiencies**

The Bucks County Free Library will utilize technologies and processes that improve access to information, enhance customer service, and maximize efficient service delivery.

**Initiative 6.1:** By March 1, 2009, identify processes that have the potential for being accomplished in a more efficient manner and appoint taskforces to study those which have the greatest potential for improved public service or reducing the amount of staff time required to complete the task.

**Initiative 6.2:** By June 1, 2009, completely redesign the Library's web site to ensure that the content supports the Library's service priorities and the site is user-friendly.

**Initiative 6.3:** Annually review and revise the materials budget allocations to ensure that they support the library's strategic plan.

**Initiative 6.4:** By December 1, 2009, identify and implement ordering and purchasing policies and procedures that will result in materials being available for public use in a more timely manner.

### **Organizational Competency 7: Organizational Structure**

The Bucks County Free Library will establish and maintain an organizational structure that supports its service priorities.

**Initiative 7.1:** By December 1, 2009 review library committee structure and revise to support the service priorities.

**Initiative 7.2:** By December 1, 2009, identify and implement methods that should be used to improve communication between and within library branches, departments, etc.

### **Organizational Competency 8: Policies**

The Bucks County Free Library will operate within a policy framework that reflects the organization's values and promotes effective and efficient service delivery.

**Initiative 8.1:** By January 1, 2009, complete a policy audit and evaluation of the library's public service policies.

**Initiative 8.2:** By January 1, 2009, develop timeline and process to revise the library's public service policies to ensure that they support the Library's values and goals.

**Initiative 8.3:** By December 1, 2009, complete the revision or development of public service policies that supports the library's values and goals.

### **Organizational Competency 9: Training and Staff Development**

The Bucks County Free Library will recruit, train, and deploy staff that provide and support quality customer service for all library users.



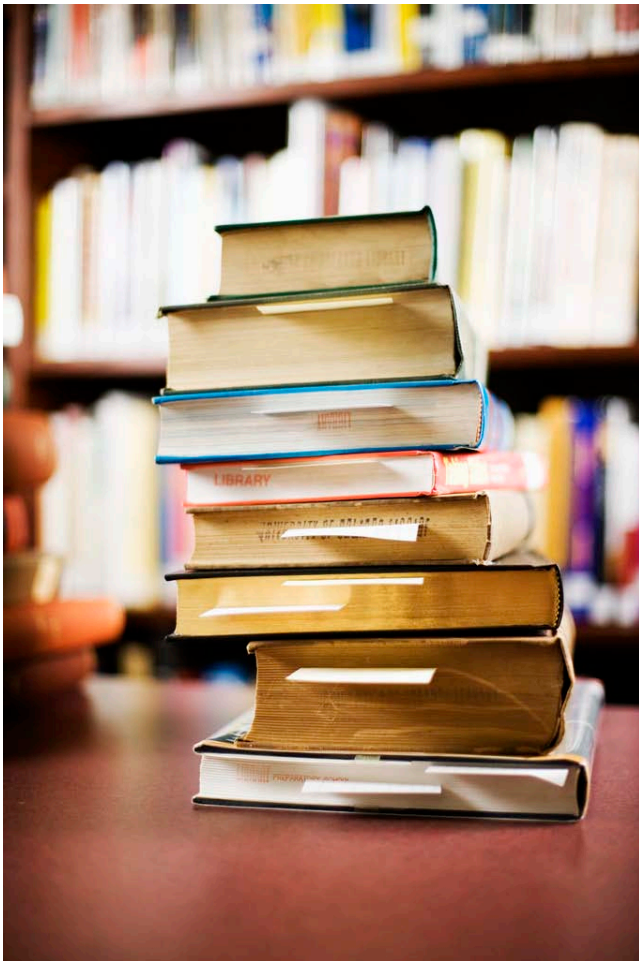
**Initiative 9.1:** By October 1, 2009, adopt a Staff Development Plan that identifies the training that will be needed by staff to implement the approved service goals and effective activities.

**Initiative 9.2:** By June 1, 2009, implement a new employee orientation program.

**Initiative 9.3:** By January 1, 2010, comprehensively train public service staff to provide proactive customer service that is less information desk dependent and more integrated with collection development and merchandizing.

## V. NEXT STEPS

The Bucks County Free Library board, staff, and management are committed to achieving the ambitious goals and objectives in this Strategic Plan. We will take the following steps to ensure its continued success:



- Distribute the Strategic Plan to key stakeholders, including but not limited to: members of the Community Planning Committee, Friends of the Library, local media, and library staff.
  - Post the Strategic Plan on the library's web site ([www.buckslib.org](http://www.buckslib.org)) so it is readily accessible to all community residents.
  - Request an opportunity to discuss and outline the Strategic Plan with government officials and representatives of the local media.
  - Develop and distribute information to specific audiences (such as teachers, parents of young children, students, and so forth) that describes that services that are now or will soon become available to them because of the Strategic Plan.
- 
- Develop action plans that identify what must and will be done to accomplish each goal.
  - Reallocate appropriate resources to ensure that the library successfully achieves goals and objectives in the Strategic Plan within the determined limits.
  - Identify potential partners and collaborate with them to achieve the goals and objectives put forth by the Strategic Plan.
  - Report regularly on the measurable progress in pursuit of the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan, as well as the organizational competencies and initiatives.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: SWOT ANALYSIS OF BUCKS COUNTY

During the first meeting of the Community Planning Committee, community members participated in a SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity, threat) analysis of Bucks County. They followed these instructions:

*Think about Bucks County as it is now. What are the County's strengths? What are the County's weaknesses? Then consider the future of Bucks County. What opportunities and threats do you think the County will face in the coming years?*

### STRENGTHS

- Existing community infrastructure with a history of activism
- County is financially stable
- Strong continuing education system
- Strong historical identity
- Desirable geographic location
- Access to medical facilities
- Strong institutions – educational, medical, etc
- Land preservation
- County is good at recognizing community needs
- Strong cultural identity
- Regional access to employment
- Good library system
- People themselves
- Good, strong non-profit organizations
- Well-protected by police and fire
- Transportation access to New York City and Philadelphia
- Strong cultural institutions – museums, theater, arts
- Water resources
- Good, strong, school systems
- Strong municipalities
- Varied agricultural resources
- Healthy park systems

### WEAKNESSES

- Transportation
- Fragmentation in county – so many different school systems, services in each community

- Competing objectives
- Minimal collaboration
- Roadways
- Development, losing open space
- Growing income gap
- Affordable housing
- Limited political opportunities
- Not all schools are equally good
- Less community activities available to people as they get older
- Lack of vision
- Lack of communication
- Lack of opportunity to speak out and be heard
- Lack of funding for the arts
- Irregular, inconsistent funding
- Some parts of the county are very isolated
- Lack of sidewalks
- Lack of bike paths
- Lack of protection against flooding
- Insufficient job growth

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

- Make more local bus routes
- Increase communication
- Promote collaboration – bring all facets of community to recognize and address major issues
- Home rule
- Implement 211 communication system
- Full-day kindergarten
- Countywide planning
- Provide choices for Internet services; expanded communications infrastructure
- Solidify and expand Communities That Care (CTC)
- Evening school for adults
- Variety of ways/opportunities to voice opinions and to know what issues are being discussed and when
- Place in each community that serves as a center for information
- Utilize technology and create web sites with information about local events
- Preserve more open space

## **THREATS**

- Lack of money
- Insufficient time

- Lack of will
- Politics
- Lack of leadership
- Transportation systems
- Population growth
- Economy
- Education
- Lack of inter-generational involvement
- Apathy
- Language and cultural barriers
- Over-development
- Over-building
- Traffic
- Insufficient communication
- Crime
- Lack of accessibility
- Rising taxes
- Conflicting interests
- Lack of parental involvement with kids
- Fear of change
- Cultural isolation
- Ignorance of cultural traditions
- Prejudice
- Disenfranchisement
- Local, state, and federal government regulations
- Unfunded mandates

## APPENDIX B: VISION STATEMENTS

During the first meeting of the Community Planning Committee, community members were asked to generate vision statements. They followed these instructions:

*Picture Bucks County ten years from now. Imagine that all of the communities and their people have been successful beyond belief! It is a wonderful place everyone is proud to call home. Now describe the County. What makes it so wonderful? Next think about the children, teens, adults, and seniors. Consider educational level, income, race and ethnicity, religious groups, long-time residents, newcomers, etc. Why would they want to live in Bucks County?*

The results of these Vision Statements, combined with SWOT Analysis, framed the Community Planning Committee's conversation, resulting in their eight recommended service priorities.

### **Target Audience: Everyone**

- All residents will have a sense of community and belonging.
- All residents will learn to appreciate the different cultures in our community.
- Everyone will have tolerance for all people and engage with everyone in the community.
- All residents will benefit from the communication, collaboration, and cooperation between community organizations, governments, businesses, etc.
- Everyone will have access to adequate, convenient, energy efficient transportation systems.
- Everyone will live in a community free of pollution that respects nature, promotes respect of the environment, and preserves the identity of Bucks County.
- All residents will respect and value the history and heritage of the area, including the architectural assets and the natural resources.
- All residents will have access to free and accurate information.
- Everyone will have access to technology, information, and innovation.
- All residents will have inter-generational, cross-cultural, affordable housing opportunities.
- All residents can become and remain economically viable.
- All residents will benefit from living in a community that supports families.
- Everyone, regardless of age, will have the encouragement and feel the need to volunteer.
- All residents will have the opportunity for lifelong learning.
- Everyone will have the opportunity to know about possible careers and available internships.
- Everyone can participate in a wide variety of non-competitive, co-educational recreational opportunities.
- All residents will benefit from access and exposure to the arts and have the opportunity for cultural expression.

- All residents are safe and secure, and they have timely and affordable access to health care and emergency services.
- All residents will have access to safe havens for socialization and interaction.
- All residents can walk or bike safely on any road in the County.
- All residents will have a voice and can be heard on any community issue.

### **Target Audience: Children and Teens**

- Children and teens will have safe places to play, socialize, and interact with one another.
- School age children will receive a quality education regardless of where they live in the County.
- Children, teens, and adults will have the opportunity to participate in study groups to enhance and support their learning.
- Adults and teens will have convenient, easy access to post-secondary educational opportunities such as those offered by the community college and other local institutions and agencies.
- Working parents and their employers will have access to quality, affordable childcare for children from birth until they enter elementary school.

### **Target Audience: Older Adults and Those with Special Needs**

- Seniors will be able to receive comprehensive assistance from one source.
- Seniors will have the opportunity to contribute to the community in a way that values their experience and expertise.
- Residents with special needs will be aware of and have timely access to a wide variety of support programs and services.

### **Target Audience: New Residents and Immigrants**

- New community residents will have the ability and opportunity to easily integrate into the community.
- All immigrants will be able to acquire the skills that will enable them to integrate into the community.



