

FARMINGTON LIBRARIES  
Since 1901

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Executive Director

FY2012-2013 Annual Report

Dear Team Member:

It's about seven years since I began at Farmington. As I reflect on those years, I am amazed by the institutional, technological, and societal changes we have undergone. Smartphones, social media, mobile apps, and Wifi have enabled instant communication for everyone and unintended consequences. Information overload and insistence upon immediacy have moved society in general and shifted libraries in particular. There is no question that some of the most profound societal changes came through the passion, vision, and intelligence of Steve Jobs. Indeed, Apple Computer revolutionized the interface between computers and humans. Through that transformation we can be almost constantly connected to current information. This leads to the question of what is the new modern comprehensive public library and how does it fit into this new and continuously changing electronic milieu? As I sit here in the summer of 2013 and look back while trying to look forward, I shall attempt to reconstruct the organizational advances our libraries have made over the past seven years, and to look to the future in a way that will bring future challenges and required changes to the fore.

The following describes those key elements that have sustained the greatest change over the past seven years. This overview recognizes major efforts, which have affected the program and operations significantly. It is important to remember here, that we have and always will be people centered in our approach to providing customer service beyond expectations.

1. **Teen programming**, where we revitalized the Alexander Franklin Teen Space at the main library and brought forward a new Alexander Franklin Teen Space at the post 2008-10 Barney Library. We engaged new staff and developed a new philosophy regarding teens. The Teen Space was reconfigured with new Mac's, electronics, furniture and a media-bar with Wii. Teens have also been brought into the summer volunteer program where they have mutually benefited themselves, the libraries, and the younger students with whom they worked. By believing in the teens and working hard to develop a good culture, the library has seen teens become an exciting population for our success.
2. **Adult information**, where we have integrated information services with the EventKeeper calendar program. Information staff have developed a learning

platform approach to technology and public consultancy regarding software applications, new tablet devices, and smartphones.

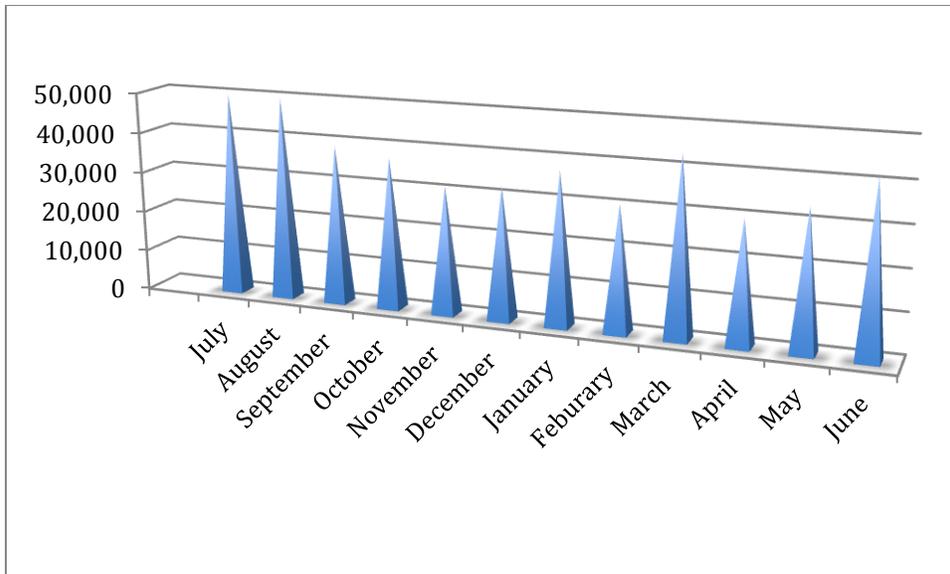
3. **Children's programming**, where we have expanded our programming with additional staff to include the greatest platform possible to instill a love of reading and understanding of social skills. Our program is based upon the National Reading Panel's Five Essential Pillars of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. We also have reluctant readers' programs featuring Tucker the Dog. Most importantly we have created an environment in the children's room where kids can be kids, free and spontaneous, and yet respectful of their surroundings. They are excited about reading within a high-powered learning environment with a puppet theater, marine aquarium, and a fabulous collection of materials for children and parents.
4. **Facilities enhancements**, where we have developed an interior landscape plan within the libraries to enable the enhanced performance of both staff and our customers, utilizing spatial relationship concepts as a key factor for management of public spaces. In that regard, we have added end panels to all shelving stacks, reconfigured furniture and stacks in key areas, and painted and recolored many key and specific areas to meet users' interests and created physical enhancements to establish services. The lobby was re-outfitted with various shelving and display areas to enhance the library presence. In addition, we were able to secure a \$1 million state grant, a \$1 million town referendum, and a \$1 million fund-raising campaign to re-invigorate and re-purpose the new Barney Library.
5. **Branch services**, where we have focused on the importance of a branch as a popular library with the most contemporary and appealing content for all ages and have specifically endeavored to invigorate the environment and the clientele's interest in that space.
6. **Technology**, where we have advanced a formal technology plan and rolled out a network based on PC and Mac platforms where individual needs are met by a knowledgeable and continuously learning staff. We have adopted a bring-your-own-device (BYOD) Wi-Fi platform to aid those individuals requiring that technology. Furthermore, staff has specifically learned new and emerging technologies in order to have the capability to assist customers as required in this 21st century environment. We have developed a new web portal in-house, which is web based and enhances customer service.
7. **Customer service**, where we adopted a philosophy of service beyond expectations and migrated from a proprietary library information system, to a superior open source library information system resulting in an 80% reduction in operating costs, which are re-allocated to library programming.

8. **Adult services**, where we have embraced e-books, downloadable audiobooks and downloadable music as a springboard to the future. In addition to these technologies, we continue on a customer-focused approach to library acquisitions and content. To balance the generational gap between technology insistent users and traditional book-centered users, we recognize that many have adopted new technology while still holding onto books. These along with many other innovations provide a high-powered yet friendly environment for our customers.
  
9. **Special services**, where in an effort to provide maximum service with an eye to pulling new users to the libraries we have become a *Passport Acceptance Facility*. In our first six months we issued over 500 passports. In addition we continue to provide Notary services to our customers.
  
10. **Remarkable Events** occur which are outside the realm of expectation or belief, yet strikes with such a thunderous impact that they become indelible in the memory of those who sustain them. Such an event occurred on Saturday, January 26 when I received a call from Kathy Lesko informing me that a pipe had ruptured partially flooding the Barney library. The events which followed are remarkable in the sense that within less than 90 days the library had recovered to full functionality. Indeed, the library is even better now than before the flood. Special thanks to our entire team for a job well done!

In summation, I will attest to our continuous review and effort to create the best possible environment and program for our citizens. I believe this team effort with our directors and staff has resulted in one of Connecticut's finest libraries. We touch each Farmington citizen almost 40 times per year. I believe you will be amazed by the following report of FY 2012-2013.

Sincerely,

J. Johnston



*The Chart shows the lending rate incrementally through FY-13 at 423,632 loans. The above data does not include the 283,726 additional service units delivered throughout the year. It also not indicate service delivery time , a metric we may find instructive in future reports.*

### Major Achievements

- Passport services
- Energy conservation
- Barney Library disaster recovery
- Safety
- Technology
- Library of the Future
- Revenue enhancements
- Programming

### Interesting Facts

- 126,032 visits to the website
- 131 teen programs, with attendance total of 1,135 teens
- 187 adult programs, with attendance of 3,567
- Volunteers gave 1,806 hours of their time to the Libraries
- 280.5 hours the information department spent providing individual technology instruction to patrons

- 777 programs with an attendance of 20,011
- Main Library 626 programs with an attendance of 16,732 average 27.26 per program
- Barney Library 151 programs with an attendance of 3, 276 average 21.69 per program

## TEAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Emerging Technologies/Community Services Accomplishments

Continued to develop social media outreach using tools such as Facebook and Twitter. From August 2012 to August 2013, the number of followers on Facebook increased from 270 to 368 and the number of Twitter followers jumped from 60 to 270. The constant posting of content continues to generate new followers every week.

We adopted the use of Constant Contact, an email marketing service that gives us more capability and flexibility when reaching out to subscribers and also provides analytics that allow us to gauge the success of these efforts. Our click-through rate on our monthly e-newsletters averages 19%; the newsletter's open rate averages 31.5%, exceeding the suggested target average open rate of 27-29% for non-profit organizations.

These electronic newsletters are becoming an increasingly effective way to reach our users, thanks in part to the original video clips we embed in each issue. Videos are considered the "king of content" by online marketers, so we have switched the delivery of the Executive Director's message from a separate written column to a video clip created in-house. In each clip Jay promotes upcoming events and other noteworthy news. We film each episode in a different part of the library to highlight the variety of its collections, services, and features.

We also saw an increase in the number of adult programs at the main library in 2012-2013. There was a continued commitment to the Director's College, with 233 people attending 9 scholarly programs. 2013 is the year of Italian Culture in the U.S., so we have developed a number of programs around this theme, including a summer Italian Film Series. Our annual Kristallnacht program in November again drew over 100 people to hear from a Holocaust survivor and a U.S. infantryman who helped liberate the Dachau concentration camp. Other notable programs included an author talk with New York Times best-selling debut author, Charlotte Rogan, a poetry performance with annual local favorite Stephen Collins, gardening program with renown lifestyle expert Mar Jennings, a glimpse into ghost hunting with the Northeast Paranormal Investigation Society, popular film series for independent and classic films, and workshops on writing, financial planning, and health related topics.

## Adults services /Accomplishments

Over the course of the past year we continued to improve the patron's library experience both in person and online through a number of enhancements, some large, some small. With the increasing amount of content and services becoming available to the public online it was important to us that the library maintain its relevancy in the community by being at once a physical location that draws the town's residents as well as a virtual presence that is user friendly and practical.

Creating a space that is comfortable and accommodating to patrons is crucial in drawing them to the library. It is just as important that the collections held within the library meet the patrons' needs and are easily accessible. The final and maybe the most important aspect of the library itself, is the staff. If the staff is knowledgeable and friendly, patrons will find them approachable and irreplaceable. To meet these goals we undertook a number of projects, including, but not limited to:

1. Offering Passport Acceptance and passport photo processing. People are busy. Google may have shortened the length of time it takes for us to gather the information we seek, but it hasn't been able to make people's lives less hectic. Many patrons who call in to make a passport appointment comment on how convenient it is for them to be able to stop on their way home or out to dinner with their family to get a passport.
2. Allowing patrons to schedule one-to-one technology classes with knowledgeable friendly staff for free on a range of topics including Microsoft Office programs, e-devices and social media applications.
3. Creating a new Master Borrower's Agreement for electronic devices, which only requires a patron to fill it out once and needs only to be updated when the patron's card expires, was another step we took to increase convenience and accessibility for patrons. This new form also extended borrowing privileges to minors who had previously been denied the ability to checkout these items.
4. Installing hearing assistive technology in the community room to enable patrons with hearing impairments to attend library programs. The system can accommodate an unlimited number of users and has both ear-buds and neck-loops to meet the needs of patrons with different types of hearing devices.
5. Streamlining department procedures, such as ILL, to free up staff desk time, allowing staff to focus more on assisting patrons.
6. Centralizing communication and daily tasks via the Intranet to ensure that all staff, both part-time and full-time are always aware of any procedural changes or updates in the department. This eliminated staff confusion and increased

our ability to offer patrons the service they deserve.

7. Offering a new online video streaming service to Farmington library card holders. There are millions of people watching videos online on their computers, TVs and mobile devices. In an effort to meet this demand we purchased the IndieFlix service, which allows an unlimited number of patrons to stream free independent films on any device they own with a web browser.
8. Enhancing the space itself by relocating the Health collection to offer patrons more privacy when browsing this collection; creating a new quiet seating area at the far end of the adult department to offer patrons an area for leisure reading, studying and working on mobile devices; and moving the new adult non-fiction collection so that it is adjacent to the new adult fiction collection in order to make it easier for patrons to peruse both collections. This also enabled us to move the highly popular and ever-growing audiobook collection to an area with more space.

Despite the fact that the library offers extensive physical collections and a variety of convenient services, we know that there are still people who prefer to conduct what business they can online. We cannot force these people to come into the library, but if they visit our website and can easily learn about all of the ways we can assist them, then they will be much more likely to visit the library in person. In order to increase usability and improve the patron's online user experience we created a new website using Wordpress as a content management system (CMS). The new website can be managed from devices with an internet connection making it much easier to keep the information current, especially in emergency situations. The new website is also mobile friendly, meaning that a separate app is not necessary to view the site on mobile devices, increasing convenience for patrons. The new site also enabled us to integrate all of our blogs into one News "feed" giving patrons a one-stop-shop for finding out all they need to know about what is happening at the library. Instead of forcing people to hunt for the information they seek on the website, we organized and presented content with the patrons' needs in mind.

#### Teen services/Accomplishments

Added more innovative programming and continued to expand both print and AV collections to meet teens ever-changing needs and interests. We also added new technology to better support the teens in their academic and recreational pursuits. To that end, we added four new PCs, which teens can use to complete homework assignments as well as play online games and browse the internet. There is one game in particular that is very popular with teens right now and consistently draws a group of teen boys to the library's Teen Space. Not only are these computers popular during the school year, but the same teens who enjoy playing the game on them after school,

continue to come to the library during the summer; this was not the case in previous years.

We also purchased an Xbox 360 in order to offer more challenging video game tournaments and to maintain relevancy with the teen population. The Wii is not as popular as it was some 4 plus years ago when it was purchased. This type of technology is ever-changing and improving and if we are going to maintain our relevancy with the teens we need to maintain currency with technology. There isn't a day that goes by during the school year that the Xbox isn't being used. Not only does it offer traditional role playing games, but the Xbox also comes with the Kinect device, which allows teens to actively (with their bodies) participate in games. The Kinect Adventures game is a great way for teens to get some exercise and have fun together in the library after sitting all day in school.

#### Children's Services /Accomplishments

626 programs presented at the Main Library where 16,732 people participated 151 programs presented for children at The Barney Library with an attendance of 2276 Expanded partnership with Bristol Hospital presenting parenting classes, doing double the number of yearly classes Offered Chess classes and won The Scholastic Chess Trophy Purchased ipads, loaded games and developed curriculum for toddler ipad classes starting in September Added a wall activity board for toddlers to The Children's Department decor Tween area arrangement updated with new shelving and display areas Rearranged furniture to increase parental supervision of new Lego and train tables Retired Tucker The Reading Dog and started the training process of Lucy who will replace Tucker Brainstormed cooperative programming efforts for Tweens with Farmington Parks and Recreation Absorbed the management of Museum Passes for the system in The Children's Department

#### Barney Library Accomplishments

Planned and presented 151 programs for children with an attendance of 3, 276

Planned and presented 55 adult programs with an attendance of 1062

Coordinated culminating book discussion group activity with Noah Wallace librarian, art teacher and students using ipads for a scavenger hunt

Hired and trained a new Branch Assistant who is an MLS student

Implemented "no holds" bestseller copy acquisition, so that patrons can find a "hot" book on the shelf at Barney

Cleaned, organized, restructured, reestablished and rebuilt branch library service after the January pipe break to the extent that by July of 2013 lending and attendance was higher than 2012

Hosted the first three Garmany Concerts

### **2012-2013 Lending/Collection Management/network services points**

Due to continued diligence in collecting fines owed by patrons, we have increased our fine revenue 2% from the previous year.

We have implemented a method of conveying notes to staff members through our Koha library system interface so that they will see important action points in a timely manner.

We have enhanced our DVD storage mechanisms in the lending department to accommodate our increasing DVD collection – including children's DVDs.

We have re-allocated processing of children's books to existing staff after the departure of our previous processor.

We have hired three new staff members to replace staff members who have moved on to other jobs.

We have purchased and deployed new technology equipment throughout the library to enhance our ability to serve the public. These purchases include 26 new computers, a new laser printer, new server equipment to enhance the new web site, and new video equipment in the main lobby to advertise our events.

We are now in the process of evaluating scanner technology that will allow us to read barcodes directly from smartphones.