

Haston Library Strategic Plan

Town of Franklin

Established in 1789, Franklin has been an agricultural community and, largely because of Lake Carmi, a tourist destination for more than two centuries. Since 1908, the Haston Library has been a community focal point and important resource for the town.



The Haston Library strategic plan is developed to provide guidelines and vision for this library and the community it serves. Every modern public library has some things in common with every other public library—they are a repository of books, employ some method for lending these books to the public and today offer access to technology that enables people to connect to the wider world. Every public library is also different from every other public lending institution. These differences are a result of the boards that run the libraries and most importantly, a reflection of the communities they serve. As those communities change, the role of the library and the services it provides, change as well. The strategic plan seeks to articulate the changing needs and wants of the community and provides a guide to the staff and board of directors as they plan for the future.

Gathering Information:

With this goal in mind, the strategic planning committee, in concert with the board of directors and library staff, organized a series of meetings to which the public was invited to voice their concerns, express their ideas and share their vision for the Haston Library. Data collected at these meetings were compiled and examined. The recommendations that follow are a direct representation of that material.

The first public meeting was held in the town hall and drew mostly from the community of permanent residents in Franklin. The crowd was divided into two groups and through listening, asking a set of leading questions and a lively discussion, each group generated a list of ideas that expressed their aspirations for the future of the library. The lists of both groups were compared and merged.

Both groups agreed that the library was an important part of the community and that the library staff and volunteers worked hard to make the library function successfully. There was general and enthusiastic support for many of the library's existing programs such as the book club, story hour and other children's programming. There were also a number of suggestions for the expansion of library programming, much of which focused on community building.

The second public meeting was held in the FALCO room and was designed to seek out

the thoughts and wishes of the Lake Carmi community, most of whom are seasonal residents of the area. This group was very supportive of the library staff and felt that they were made most welcome. Many of those in attendance saw the library as the primary access point to the Franklin community. This group repeated many of the points raised in the first meeting and were especially appreciative of the library as a source of technology. They hoped the library would continue to remain current with new technology.

Future Directions:

On the basis of the data collected at these meetings and following up with the Service Response Metrics provided by Vermont Department of Libraries, we have identified three areas that community members hope the library will embrace. These are:

1. Express creativity
2. Satisfy curiosity
3. Connect to the online world

Express Creativity:

This focus area can be developed and expanded in many ways. The library has been holding art openings and displaying the work of local artists. In the coming months and years we hope to continue this program and reach out to a broad array of local talent.



There was interest in having the library sponsor or facilitate outdoor concerts, perhaps inviting local musicians including high school jazz bands or others to participate. There was interest in having the library space used for gatherings of quilters or others who work in the other fiber arts.

Satisfy Curiosity:

A number of instructional classes were suggested including a CPR class, gardening programs and a car seat safety instruction class. It was suggested that the library might reach out to the community to identify members with particular talents or passions that they would be willing to share in a public forum. The development of the Community Brain Trust, perhaps as simple as a sign-up sheet, would allow people to learn more about their neighbors' expertise and for others to share their special talents. As we know more about the people in our community, we strengthen that community.

Another community-building idea was titled Student Connect, which might allow high school students to connect through the library with younger children who might enjoy having a book read aloud or with older patrons who might need general assistance. Such a program would help area high school students fulfill their community service

obligations, while improving the lives of residents of Franklin

Connect to the Online World

The Haston Library has recently updated technology through the acquisition of several new computer terminals and increased download and upload speeds to an impressive 11.28 Mbps and 3.85 Mbps respectively. There is public Wi-Fi and with the addition of the Wright memorial bench on the front lawn, more people will be able to take advantage of this popular service.

As many of the participants in the public meetings stressed, it is very important to remain on the cutting edge of available technology. Expectations of speed, ease and access will need to be met if the library is to fulfill its role as a community technology hub.

The Haston Library has been, and continues to be, an important institution in the village of Franklin. It provides access to books, technology and cultural enrichment in a multi-generational gathering space. The Haston Library has a commendable history and as the institution evolves, reflecting the needs and interests of its patrons, this library will continue to play a vital role in the future of our community.