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Strategic Planning & Feedback

Whether done in a for-profit corporate world or in a non-profit environment such as a library, meaningful strategic planning is difficult, and therefore sometimes done as presumed requirement rather than with conviction, vision and a sense of urgency. Words are sometimes put to paper and paper to file while those who penned them return to everyday operations, a comfort zone.

So, with that little bit of philosophy in hand, let me summarize some real progress on Murrysville Community Library's (MCL) Strategic Plan 2019-21 against goals reviewed at a Board workshop convened on January 16. There are three.

Enrich patron experience: With a Phase I expansion/renovation of the Children's Room having been completed in 2013, a broader, and perhaps more difficult, redo of other physical space, a Phase II, was to have been planned and begun. The TechNook little theater streaming project mentioned previously (<https://www.murrysvillelibrary.org> archive) is a first step of Phase II. Construction of it has begun with William Snyder, Senior Principal Architect of Design 3 Architecture, leading the way and SCAN Technology Solutions as the project contractor. In respect to youth programming, this first goal was also to have included a specific focus on teen inclusion; that has been slowed somewhat by a transition in library directors and now COVID-19.

Sustaining MCL: With this goal, the most impactful intent was a better job of communicating with you the public. We hope that has been achieved by our three initiatives, including: (1) the more focused use of social media by staff; (2) extending farther out into the whole service area (which includes Export and Washington Township), begun with Washington Township by including library news in a community newsletter; and (3) this The Magic Library Card! series in the Penn-Franklin News.

Expand Community Engagement: In the past, recently retired Coordinator of Youth Services Carol Siefken, a community hero, was very successful in regard to this goal, including in collaborations with the Franklin Regional School District (FRSD). She was recognized in 2009 with the prestigious statewide *David J. Roberts EXCEL Library Service Award*. With a very new Coordinator now in place, continuity is fully expected. You just read about all the good things coming in the two previous articles of this series.

Workshop participants also discussed priorities that might not have been emphasized in the original Strategic Plan 2019-21, ones perhaps that may now be elevated by issues like COVID-19 and being pushed to serve the public in previously inconceivable ways. MCL Board Trustee Joy Richardson championed one such, to better engage library staff, volunteers, and patrons, which she called "Virtual Suggestion Box." Everyone would be invited to send and share links/websites to the MCL for otherwise hard-to-find sources that inform and/or entertain. Her example was: "One place, tucked deep within the thirteen.org website, is a page devoted to Channel 13's 'Theater Close-Up' series of off-Broadway productions."

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The best way to know about how you the patron values our directions taken is to have feedback directly from you. For example, we would really, especially like to have your feedback about the three strategic means of communication mentioned in the second goal, "Sustaining MCL." If you are willing to take just a moment to provide that feedback, I invite you to do so, actually strongly encourage that you do so, at foundation@murrysvillelibrary.org, and I thank you for being willing.

Charles B. Greenberg
Immediate Past President, WLN Board