

Rahway Public Library Annual Report 2015

Highlights

We close the book on year eleven in the 2 City Hall Plaza building. We experienced big changes in personnel this year. We said goodbye to longtime employees Carol Marlowe, Sandra Carson and Nancy Caverly. This left us with big shoes to fill and we did so with great success. Linda Smith joins us as Accountant, Norma Wine joins us as Senior Librarian, and Allison Ameduri joins us as Library Associate (attending library school) for Children's Services. We welcome them and look forward to working with them. It is exciting to bring in people with new skills and interests to share. New employees give us the opportunity to re-focus on training. It is also an opportunity to change the way we do some things such as moving some operations online and creating new roles for staff.

The Board of Trustees experienced big changes as well with the retirements of longtime Trustees Ken Pushko, and Margaret Cilia. The Board continued their commitment to make community connections this year and delivered special programs and events such as author's talks and writer workshops, holiday celebrations, music, and children's programs. They gave their attention to policy issues, writing or revising a dozen policies throughout the year. Several trustees attended continuing education through the New Jersey Trustee Institute.

The Friends of the Library made some new Friends this year expanding their roster and their program schedule. Now in addition to the Book Sale, the Amazing Rahway Race and the Progressive Dinner, they have added the Mystery Dinner, Dodgeball Tournament, and the Wine and Design event. As a result, they made large donations to the library for items on our wish list and also continued to support the Summer Reading Program.

There were improvements in services this year, including expanding hours, increasing e-book resources and continuing to upgrade technology equipment.

Building and Grounds

The maintenance of 2 City Hall Plaza continues to challenge us. The common areas and grounds are always in need of repair; the steps, the garage, lighting, elevators, hvac. The hydraulic tank of the passenger elevator was replaced this year and a condenser unit for the lobby hvac was also replaced. Both repairs were major expenses and charged to the Condominium Association fund for emergency repairs.

Security

The building is fully occupied and so although we have no count for the traffic in the building, we know that we have an average of 350 visitors a day, the second floor businesses do not have public visitors but the third floor businesses have large public clienteles- likely bigger than ours. There are many more security incidents and concerns. We addressed some concerns through policy, improving camera surveillance, and increased vigilance. We have many more issues to address in the coming year.

Programs and Services

We explored new topics and trends in our programs this year. Children's programs included math, science and technology. There was computer coding for children and teens, makerspace creativity for teens, and also anti-bullying for teens. We received a Union County Freeholder Grant for Children's Programming and bought instruments for children. We continued the Café Music Series, Reader's Circle Book Group, and Computer Literacy workshops. There were job searching workshops, small business workshops and New Jersey History programs. Other popular programs were the Lego Club and comic book illustration. We continued longstanding community partnerships; the Rahway Senior Center, Rahway schools, the Rahway Arts District, Rahway Garden Club, Literacy Volunteers of Union County, SCORE, Easter Seals, Girl Scouts, Homeschoolers Club, the Rahway Chamber of Commerce, and forged new partners; Live Well Rahway Committee, the Rahway Prevention Coalition. Our meeting room continues to be in demand, with over 150 community meetings taking place this year, in addition to 200 library sponsored events. Library sponsored events brought in over 5,000 visitors. Computer sessions continue to grow, exceeding 80,000 sessions this year- far exceeding circulation of library materials. The significance of this is that we provide support for people in managing their lives through computers; job searching, completing applications for services, helping with research and with staying in touch with family, all important pieces of our service to the public.

Come In. Find Out.

Gail Miller
Library Director