

JOSEPH F. SHUBERT LIBRARY EXCELLENCE AWARD APPLICATION

Please check one category only: Individual Library
Library Consortium (System)

NAME OF LIBRARY OR LIBRARY CONSORTIUM (SYSTEM) _____

Greece Public Library

PARENT INSTITUTION: _____

ADDRESS: 2 Vince Tofany Blvd. Rochester, NY 14612

CONTACT NAME: Bernadette Foster

PHONE NUMBER: () 585 720 4103

SIGNATURE: Bernadette Foster
CHIEF LIBRARIAN/DIRECTOR

For Consortia applications:

SIGNATURE: _____
CHIEF OFFICER

SIGNATURE: _____
CHIEF OFFICER

Your nomination for a project/achievement that occurred within the last 2 years should include your responses to the following 4 questions:

1. a) Briefly describe your library or library consortium (system) and its community. Provide information about size, budget, type, users. b) Briefly describe your project/achievement.
2. How did you identify the user need(s) for your project?
3. What did your library or library consortium (system) do to respond to that (those) need(s)? What challenges were met?
4. What impact did this project have on your users and/or your community? Supply quantifiable data if appropriate.

Please limit your narrative to no more than 4 pages. Please send 4 copies of each application, and include 4 copies of any attachments, to the following address by the deadline of June 15, 2012:

Regents Advisory Council on Libraries
Joseph F. Shubert Library Excellence Award
c/o Paula Paolucci
New York State Library
10C34 Cultural Education Center
Albany, NY 12230
518-474-5930; ppaolucc@mail.nysed.gov

The Greece Public Library is a 35,000 square foot facility built in 2000 and located in Greece, New York. It is a suburban community with a population of 94,000. The library is part of a consortium with the Rochester Public Library which allows for a greater depth of resources. The Greece Library circulates over 1,000,000 items annually and has 54,000 active cardholders. Library services include free Internet access, Wi-Fi, and computer use through 45 public computer terminals and laptops. In addition, the library offers a variety of entertainment and educational programming for adults, teens and children. The library loans an assortment of adult, teen and children fiction, non-fiction, audio and visual materials both in print and digital format.

In November 2010, analysis of material circulation revealed an increase of 43% for the years 2008-2011 and a 62% increase in program attendance over the same period. In 2011, 18,236 people attended our adult, teen and children's programs and nearly 10,000 were unable to attend because of program availability and seating capacity. With a population base of 94,000 citizens, we had a single programming room with a maximum occupancy of 50. An analysis of other aspects of our services revealed that programming offered our best opportunity to improve satisfaction and product demand for our community given the number of people unable to attend because of occupancy and frequency of programming considerations. A plan was proposed to construct one new programming room within the existing square footage to meet the increase in programming demands. This new programming room would include a movable wall capable of dividing the room in two. This feature could allow two programs to occur simultaneously. This required elimination of 20-25% of the existing adult fiction and non-fiction print material shelf space.

In preparation for reducing the size of the existing print material space, the affected collection was analyzed to determine which material types were most and least active as measured by circulation. This information was used to justify what to remove and what to retain to achieve the 20-25% space reduction. At the time of analysis, the print collection consisted of 150,000 items. Roughly 60,000 items would be impacted by the space reduction. This included 40,000 Adult Non-Fiction and 18,000 Adult Fiction books. Research revealed that 14,000 items circulated only once in 12 months and nearly 10,000 items did not circulate in the previous 12 months or more. Nearly half of the collection affected was 7 years or older. The average age of the affected collection was 4 years old. Examination of non-fiction materials identified high circulating areas of interest and designations of low interest or in some cases, no interest. It was also revealed that at any given time, 74% of the affected collection was on the shelf. This overview highlighted several unfortunate conditions: the collection was old, inactive and of limited interest to the public.

However, the results of the study and the action required were not well received by all staff. Traditional philosophy about library content and collection development collided with a plan of action that removed items deemed classic or necessary based on circulation statistics. For example, Cliff Notes, historically considered mandatory, did not circulate in over 24 months but occupied significant shelf space. Data encouraged purchasing decisions and collection development practices to be driven by patron use statistics rather than abstract librarian philosophy. The strength of the data and its repetitive appearance and trajectory weakened resistance and strengthened the footing of this new course of action. It was difficult to argue against the numerical facts. The study changed how the library decides what to buy, how we

allocate monies and how we maintain a collection. It was an earthquake in the philosophical environment of librarianship at the Greece Public Library, but the ambition of improving the quality of service and increasing the number of satisfied patrons resulted in a full recovery. The decision about what to eliminate to facilitate the expansion was complete, but the project still had other obstacles to overcome. As is the case with most things, money is the grease that moves the wheels.

The proposed meeting room plan and library renovation was determined to cost \$650,000. Increasing community taxes to fund the project was not an option. We applied to our New York State Legislative Representatives for a grant and received funding in 2011. This grant did not cover the funding of the entire project and other revenue streams were considered. Of immediate interest was our internal bookstore. It is managed and run by the Friends of the Greece Public Library volunteer group. It sells discarded library materials and public book and video donations. Annually, the bookstore generates around \$45,000. It occupied a 60 square foot room in the building that was always stocked full of product and people. It is a very popular feature of our library. This terribly small space resulted in the bulk of bookstore holdings being discarded or sold offsite from a remote location. With a bigger store front, more product could be offered, more sold and more revenue generated. The architectural floor plan now included the repurposing of the old programming room to be converted to a new bookstore. The new store increased in size from 60 square feet to 600 square feet. The existing capital was used to bridge the construction costs and furniture needs of the project. Future bookstore revenue would be used to fund the expected doubling of program frequency and expenditures.

Now that the plan was in place, the details clear and financing confirmed, construction began in January 2012. The finalized plan included the construction of one new programming room, the relocation of Adult Fiction to the former Quiet Study Area. A new Quiet Study Area was constructed that offered more isolation, more seating and an improved location to accommodate current technology trends. A new Conference Room was constructed for public use and reservation which was previously unavailable. Our Teen Area was heavily renovated to achieve a more contemporary and inviting appearance. This renovation also provided for more promotional opportunities for Teen materials and a more commercially familiar appearance commonly seen in popular bookstores. The entire library would be re-carpeted, repainted and new lighting fixtures installed throughout. A regionally popular feature of our library is a 1200 gallon aquarium. A new lounge area including new furniture was designed around this principle attraction of our library. The furniture included comfortable lounge seating, lighted desk seating and convenient tables for refreshment and reading material placement. It was an ambitious and massive project that required the total participation of every staff member and the cooperation and patience of the public.

The project was completed 01 June 2012. The inconvenience to the public was minimal. The library closed entirely for 7 days in May. Programming was temporarily discontinued. The building remained nearly fully operational for the duration of the project. This was an important feature in the planning of the project. The library kept the public constantly informed of progress through the website, informational bookmarks and resources as well as an ongoing live blog that included photographs of the construction. These efforts were well received and appreciated.

The impact of the project are visual improvements to the appearance of the library, more convenient relocation of materials, new seating availability and the comforts of the new lounge area in front of the aquarium. Patrons in pursuit of a quiet study environment now had a more isolated and silent environment and better access to power for contemporary technologies. The redistribution of the materials budget in response to collection analysis resulted in an immediate increase in availability of best-selling titles and a reduction in the length of waiting time for items of interest. More patron requests for materials were met on the first visit than any time prior with the expansion of the "Express" book collection. The more focused patron driven purchasing methods also contributed to an increase in first visit customer satisfaction. The collection is now more current and more material is purchased that reflect the interests and demands of the patrons. The collection is systematically maintained and evaluated to monitor current trends and conditions. The Teen Area is enthusiastically occupied and enjoyed. The first scheduled programs were immediately filled and people pleased by the doubling of availability and frequency of scheduling. The new bookstore expanded its hours, its product availability and experienced an immediate increase in revenue since reopening June 1st. The project resulted in a massive overhaul of the physical appearance and impacted how we deliver goods and services, the philosophies we apply to delivering those goods and services and the role our library serves in meeting community needs and wants.

Exciting Renovations Coming to the Greece Public Library

As one of the most visited libraries in our area, the Greece Public Library is one of the true gems of our community. My Town Board colleagues and I are committed to providing our residents with the highest quality services and amenities when they visit our library.

We're pleased to be able to share with you our latest plans to improve your experience at the Greece Public Library. Renovations will begin this year to create a larger program room, an expanded teen area, additional quiet study areas, and a new area for the Friends of the Greece Public Library Secondhand Prose Bookstore. A combination of grant monies and town funds will be used to pay for these exciting renovations.



With increasingly popular programs and events, we felt there was a need to build a larger program room to accommodate more people. This improvement will re-purpose approximately 3,000 square

feet of existing space to create two 1,500 square foot program rooms, which can be converted in to one large program room when necessary. These rooms will allow for increased participation in programs, events, and story times, with a maximum occupancy of 200 +/- people.

The renovation will incorporate existing design elements featured in the library that will blend well with the remaining building. Complete renovations will include:

- Construction of demising walls
- Energy efficient lighting
- Installation of emergency exit out of the new program room
- Installation of new carpeting
- Installation of new storage areas in the north end of the new program room

Additional renovations will include converting the current program room and a portion of the book stack for various purposes, creating quiet study pods throughout the stack area, and relocating the Teen Area to the west of the new program room.

We are fortunate to have such an incredible resource like the Greece Public Library in our community. We hope that you are as excited about the changes as we are, and that you will continue to make the Greece Public Library one of the most visited libraries in our region.

