



## 2021-2025 Strategic Plan

### *Introduction*

Originally established in 1915, and situated on its current grounds since 1977, the Old Forge Library is a vital asset to the communities in and around the Town of Webb. The resources it houses, and the annual volume of residents who use an array of diverse library services, testify to the value our residents place on literacy, learning, and community.

Since the library's founding, its role has evolved significantly. In addition to providing space for books, reference services, meeting and study space, the library has expanded its offerings to include free Wi-Fi,



digital media, and an array of diverse programming. Annually, the library supports and creates approximately 200 programs ranging from early childhood development, ongoing adult education, art exhibits, concerts, craft times, author readings, writing workshops and various other educational, cultural and social opportunities.

Every five years, to ensure the library continues to serve our community's changing needs and goals, the library trustees, director, and staff embark on a strategic planning process. They evaluate library services, analyze community and library statistics, and gather community feedback and input. Drawing on this reflection and analysis, they craft a strategic plan: a set of values, goals, objectives, and actions. The end result serves as a guide for the library team as they enhance and expand library services to create a vital and sustainable organization that meets present and future community needs.

## ***Our Mission***

The Mission of the Old Forge Library is to provide materials and services to enhance the quality of life in our community. We welcome and support all in the pursuit of lifelong learning. We believe that the freedoms to read, to learn, to inspire, and to discover will provide enjoyment, enrich lives and strengthen our community. We strive to provide equal access to information, ideas and knowledge through books, programs, the arts, and other resources to year-round and seasonal residents.



## ***Our Values***

### **Literacy & Learning**

Literacy and lifelong learning foster emotional intelligence, well-being, and opportunity.

### **Community Engagement**

Engaging with others fosters personal growth and well-being, emotional intelligence, and investment in the success of the community.

### **Old Forge and the Surrounding Community**

Knowledge and understanding of the history and the current state of the community are necessary not only for the present, but for our future success.

### **Equality**

We have a responsibility to serve everyone with equal dedication and care.

### **Trust**

We have a responsibility to manage with care the valuable community resources that have been entrusted to us, including the library building, materials, and staff.

## *About the Strategic Plan*

With community input, the library staff and the board of trustees identified the library's strengths and created goals for the future. Old Forge Library's Strategic Plan for 2021 through 2025 is a framework for understanding and meeting the needs of the community and to deliver and measure improvements to services. The plan was developed based on input from library users and community residents who responded to our survey.

The strategic plan is an active and "living" document. The library board and staff will conduct an annual review of the plan to monitor our progress addressing our defined goals and to revise as necessary and grow with the needs of the community.

The library aims to be a gathering space for our community to access ideas and information. Providing books, materials and information is key to our mission, but the Old Forge Library also strives to demonstrate how information can be used to explore, entertain, create, and enhance lives. The library celebrates and supports writers, artists, and makers in our community and provides people of all ages resources to create, collaborate, and problem-solve.

Through the goals set-out in this plan, the library will continue to ensure everyone is given equal access to tools that spark curiosity and nurture learning.



## ***Our Goals***

### **Goal 1: Literacy and Life-long Learning: Knowledge is freedom, and accessible to all.**

*The Old Forge Library will continue to investigate and develop new collections, services and programs that spark an interest in reading, stimulate curiosity, and attract both new and familiar users to the library.*

- Celebrate and support authors and readers.
- Facilitate physical and digital access to library materials, information, and ideas.
- Purchase new, relevant and inspiring materials for the library collection.
- Follow news and trends within the community, region, nation and world for inspiration in crafting the library collection, programming, and services to maintain relevance.
- Provide programming and services that promote reading, writing and critical thinking.
- Offer classes and workshops to enhance literacy skills for all community demographics and every age group.
- Inspire and encourage exploration and creativity and provide experiences of art and music.

### **Strategies & Action Items:**

- Maintain a physical collection that does not exceed the physical space the library has available for materials. “Weed” under-used materials annually to create space for high-demand and popular materials that patrons want to borrow.
- Utilize display strategies and best practices for displaying the collection for ease of use.
  - Move parenting related materials from the Non-fiction section into the children’s room where they gain accessibility to parents of young children.
- Analyze patron usage data for determining best allocation of funds for purchase of materials and services, to meet the ever-changing needs of the community.
  - Evaluate Hoopla usage annually to craft best patron use plan.
  - Evaluate subscriptions annually to determine which physical periodicals are most used, and if there are subscriptions that should be added or suspended.
- Continue to offer a wide variety of classes and workshops.
  - Execute at least 150 program sessions annually.
  - Create a calendar of events that target both multi-generational audiences and audiences of every age group.
  - Create a programming schedule that balances library traditions and new ideas.

- Biannually evaluate current programs and signature programs to determine whether they are successful, if changes are needed, or if library resources would be better spent on programs addressing other needs.
- Re-establish *Linking Lives through Reading* to foster relationships between adults and elementary school students.
- Foster partnerships with area schools by continuing and expanding programs that target youth learning; the annual author visits, *Poetry and Illustration Workshops, Contest & Exhibition*, Pre-school Story Hour and Summer Reading Program.
  - Create an annual YA program; an author, illustrator or poet visit for middle and high school students.
- Expand programming for writers and authors. Meet and exceed minimal annual benchmarks of :
  - Three local author presentations
  - Three programs or program-series to develop writing skills
  - Two “Open-Mic” programs
- Continue to maintain arts and music programming through a diverse annual art exhibition calendar and a wide variety of concerts and hands on arts instruction workshops.

## **Goal 2: Community Hub: The library is an integral part of the community it serves.**

*The Old Forge Library engages the community by providing space and services that unite people and form connections.*

- Ensure a convenient, welcoming and easy-to-use library experience.
- Provide a safe, secure, and comfortable setting.
- Create an engaging and positive atmosphere for library patrons and staff.
- Cultivate partnerships with local organizations including schools, community groups, and other regional organizations to reach broader segments of the community.
- Provide opportunities for civic engagement.
- Provide meeting space for organizations both in the community, and those visiting the community for professional and educational development.
- Through library programs and collections, the community will access information on local, national and world affairs and find the resources they need to be able to fully participate in the civic process.

### **Strategies & Action Items:**

- Continue to maintain and improve the building and grounds for patron, staff and future uses:

- Grounds: addition of more outdoor seating to library grounds, improved fencing, foster partnership with gardening clubs and enthusiasts for improvements to reading garden
- Building upgrades to basement flooring, installation of Bilco entry for basement access
- Create a plan for reorganization of second story spaces for improved patron usage
- Continue to evaluate needs and accept creative input for improved meeting space, quiet work space, seating, and other aspects of library usage.
- Actively pursue strategies to create increased volunteer opportunities at the library, and build youth volunteer opportunities into programming schedule.
- Research speakers and potential presentation series about critical issues both local and global. Create or pay for programming that ensure that the library meets the benchmark of offering at least one program per year to support community conversations around each of the following topics:
  - Racial diversity
  - Healthcare
  - The environment
  - Current community issues
  - National issues
  - World issues
- Use the library facility and grounds for community gatherings (Easter egg hunts, dessert contests, luncheons, etc.) that foster community togetherness and inter-personal interaction.
- The Old Forge Library maintains a standing invitation to local and regional officials and community leaders to provide information on community issues to library patrons.

### **Goal 3: Fiscal Responsibility: Maximize the impact of the community's investment in the library.**

*The Old Forge Library is committed to an ongoing evaluation of our internal operations, policies and services for optimum efficiency and effectiveness.*

- Annually create a budget that addresses both immediate forecasts and expenses as well as long-term financial stability.
- Utilize fiscal policies that are in compliance with all regulations, best-practices, and good-governance.
- Manage and maximize financial investments with advice from an investment manager for growth.
- Develop and sustain a skilled and engaged staff that successfully adapts to evolving internal and external environments.
- Seek new ways to operate the library more efficiently and effectively.

## **Strategies & Action Items:**

- Update and adopt new fiscal policies that are in compliance with all regulations, best-practices, and good-governance.
- Undergo regular fiscal audits every 5 years.
- Monitor investments and create financial policies that keep those investments secure.
- Create and implement an efficient online payment & donation method.
- Create a book-keeper position.

## **Goal 4: Connecting Past, Present & Future: We have to know where we came from to know where we are going.**

*The Old Forge Library provides access to local history and documents as well as contemporary local literature and music in the Adirondack Room, home to the library's Adirondack Collection.*

- The library is committed to honoring its Adirondack heritage and community by acquiring books and materials related to the Adirondacks.
- Foster relationships with the Town of Webb Historical Association and other regional groups committed to preserving and recording the history of *The North Country*.
- By fostering and encouraging the creative spirit within our community the library is engaging patrons to interact in ways that will create the documentation of tomorrow's history.
- Raise public awareness of the library's resources and services.

## **Strategies & Action Items:**

- Welcome newcomers to our community and introduce the library through targeted outreach in partnership with service organizations and realtors.
- Support an increase in digital access for our community (bridge digital divide) by continuing to provide 24/7 Wi-Fi access on library grounds.
- Expand digital content and communications on social media.
  - Create internships to support the library on social media.
  - Sponsor a library blog with offerings from local writers.