

# KENT FREE LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN: 2015-2019

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## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Kent Free Library is an ever-changing institution, dedicated to meeting the diverse and evolving needs of our community members. I hope that every Kent resident and each Kent Free Library user has witnessed positive changes and additions to library services, resources and materials since I became Director in 2011. I can't believe that it has been nearly four years since I assumed this role. I am so very thankful that I get to be a part of this institution and help steer the direction it takes as we move further in to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Together, the dedicated and talented library staff and I, work daily to deliver quality library service to our community. However, there is still so much more that we expect for the library, that we would like to provide for the community, and that the community deserves from their public library.

Moving forward, the library will use this strategic plan to guide our decisions and inspire our actions. Every activity item in this document was drafted with input from library staff, library users, community members, other library professionals, and the Board of Trustees. Our strategic planning process included staff workshops and brainstorming sessions held during in-service training days in 2014 and early 2015. The planning process was also aided immensely by results and input from the community survey that was conducted online and in print during the fall of 2014. Finally, I also received valuable feedback during multiple *Conversations with the Director* events held during the fall of 2014. I truly appreciate hearing from both the staff and the community on ways in which the library can continue to grow and thrive to meet the needs of our users.

I am excited about the future of the library and I invite everyone in the KFL library community to join me on this journey. You'll be glad you did.

*-Stacey Richardson, Kent Free Library Director*

## MISSION

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The mission of the Kent Free Library is to meet the educational, recreational, informational and cultural needs of the community and citizens of Kent.

## PLAN BELIEFS

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This is what is truly important to us as an organization:

- *We will continually **evolve** to meet the changing demands and diverse needs of the Kent community.*
- *We will **cultivate** a team of library employees dedicated to providing service excellence in which users will receive courteous and professional attention in a pleasant environment.*
- *We will continue to **extend** our presence in the community to reach users, even those that may not walk through our doors.*
- *We are **committed** to being one of the community's most loved destinations, recognized as a leader in providing opportunities for both personal learning and recreational pursuits.*

## AREA OF FOCUS #1

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*We will continually **evolve** to meet the changing demands and diverse needs of the Kent community.*

### **GOAL: We will improve technology tools to meet customer demands.**

- Activity 1A:* Increase Wi-Fi access with a more stable signal library-wide and provide a method for printing wirelessly.
- Activity 1B:* Provide Smart board technology for meeting room facilities and library programming and update other meeting room technology.
- Activity 1C:* Install charging stations for library users to conveniently charge portable devices while visiting the library.
- Activity 1D:* Provide additional technology staff hours to assist with daily operation and to troubleshoot routine software and hardware issues.
- Activity 1E:* Enhance the public computer lab by installing new print management software and increasing the length of time users can access workstations.
- Activity 1F:* Develop a method for users to register online for library programs.
- Activity 1G:* Establish more software choices for library users to include the Adobe software suite.
- Activity 1H:* Install updated digital signage to the interior of the building to keep patrons aware of upcoming events, local news, weather and more.
- Activity 1I:* Investigate the possibility of updating the OPACs to Bibliocommons to provide a modern catalog experience for users.
- Activity 1J:* Explore the possibility of adding a 3-D printer as part of a Makerspace.
- Activity 1K:* Determine a method to provide text notifications from the library.

### **GOAL: We will evaluate existing library spaces and redesign if necessary to better meet the current needs of the library and ensure that we offer a pleasant and convenient spot to visit in the community.**

- Activity 2A:* Explore spaces for expanding Teen collection and creating a more Teen-friendly environment.
- Activity 2B:* Examine possible relocation of the Large Print collection to the first floor.
- Activity 2C:* Increase the amount of private study spaces and provide more furniture arrangements conducive to studying and group work.
- Activity 2D:* Consider the addition of a gaming station to the Youth Services department.
- Activity 2E:* Update and increase the existing display furniture and shelving to maximize merchandising of popular library collections.

- Activity 2F:* Add a conference room, including videoconferencing equipment, to the first floor.
- Activity 2G:* Develop former Café space in to a lab featuring co-working space, Apple computers loaded with the Adobe suite, and a Makerspace.
- Activity 2H:* Install a user-friendly check out desk that provides more privacy for library patrons and ease of use by library staff.
- Activity 2I:* Create a new shelving area and implement self-serve hold pick up.

**GOAL: We will provide resources to educate and entertain all ages and meet customer demand for a variety of subjects and formats, including non-book resources.**

- Activity 3A:* Create a Parent/Teacher collection.
- Activity 3B:* Develop early literacy teacher kits for preschool and STEAM based learning kits for older grades.
- Activity 3C:* Explore adding non-book collections that will enhance users' lives including Roku, tablets, laptops, hotspots, etc.
- Activity 3D:* Enhance our graphic collections with the addition of Manga.
- Activity 3E:* Establish a videogame collection.
- Activity 3F:* Consider adding Blu-Ray DVD.
- Activity 3G:* Monitor streaming movie and TV service HOOPLA for content improvements and consider adding this resource.
- Activity 3H:* Consider the addition of Indie Flicks to our downloadable collection.

## AREA OF FOCUS #2

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*We will **cultivate** a team of library employees dedicated to providing service excellence in which users will receive courteous and professional attention in a pleasant environment.*

**GOAL: We will provide training, recognition, and stability for library staff.**

- Activity 4A:* Revise and update job descriptions and salary schedule to reflect current trends in the field and library practices. Align wages to state salary survey for similar sized libraries in our budget category.
- Activity 4B:* Update staff handbook to reflect current library procedures and to observe OLC recommended policies.
- Activity 4C:* Create departmental procedural manuals including a FAQ section to assist with cross-training and succession planning.

- Activity 4D:* Provide a uniform staff orientation and training for new hires.
- Activity 4E:* Organize an annual appreciation event to recognize library staff for their dedication and thank them for their years of service.
- Activity 4F:* Provide opportunities for staff to wear library branded apparel.
- Activity 4G:* Expand cleaning responsibilities of janitorial company to include staff areas and library program spaces.
- Activity 4H:* Add a staff intranet to provide an additional channel for communication.
- Activity 4I:* Create a new performance evaluation tool that focuses on teamwork, adaptability, work ethic, and initiative in addition to job duties.

**GOAL: We will find solutions whenever we can to create conveniences for our users, understanding that they are essential to our library and we want their experience to be pleasant.**

- Activity 5A:* Explore the addition of a coffee service.
- Activity 5B:* Provide hand sanitizer stations throughout the building.
- Activity 5C:* Add headsets for Information Desk staff so they may move freely away from the desk to assist patrons wherever they may be in the building.
- Activity 5D:* Implement Mosio, a texting service, so users may text library staff.
- Activity 5E:* Install vending machines for cold beverages and snacks.
- Activity 5F:* Provide fax service.
- Activity 5G:* Establish comment boxes throughout the building for users to provide input about library staff, materials, facilities and service.

### AREA OF FOCUS #3

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*We will continue to **extend** our presence in the community to reach users, even those that may not walk through our doors.*

**GOAL: We will actively promote the library in the community.**

- Activity 6A:* Install new exterior signs that reflect the library’s current brand identity and may include digital signage to promote library events.
- Activity 6B:* Provide library branded merchandise, including plastic bags for check out and pens at all public service desks and OPAC stands.

- Activity 6C:* Develop additional print and new non-print methods to advertise outside the library building.
- Activity 6D:* Explore options to send monthly Email blasts to library users updating them of library events and services.
- Activity 6E:* Partner with the future Friends of the Kent Free Library group to provide additional library merchandise for purchase. This might include tote bags, coffee mugs, mouse pads, etc.
- Activity 6F:* Create additional online communities (i.e. Twitter, Instagram) to reach users outside the library's walls.
- Activity 6G:* Partner with the city of Kent to install public library signs on main roadways to direct traffic to the library.

#### AREA OF FOCUS #4

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*We are **committed** to being one of the community's most loved destinations, recognized as a leader in providing opportunities for both personal learning and recreational pursuits.*

**GOAL: We will develop programs that foster a sense of community and strengthen our role as a destination spot.**

- Activity 7A:* Explore new community partnership opportunities to host an annual author lecture event.
- Activity 7B:* Plan a citywide event or block party to celebrate reading or literacy.
- Activity 7C:* Increase community networks to co-sponsor more library programs.
- Activity 7D:* Consider a 'one city, one book' style event possibly in partnership with Kent City Schools.
- Activity 7E:* Increase outreach to daycares and preschools with visits and materials.
- Activity 7F:* Strengthen elementary school partnerships by allowing students to return their KFL books at their school libraries.
- Activity 7G:* Host an annual customer appreciation event.
- Activity 7H:* Encourage use of the library by small businesses and KSU students.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This strategic plan is the result of a joint effort by the library's Board of Trustees, the entire Kent Free Library staff, Kent residents, and library users. Throughout 2014 and early 2015, these groups worked together to help shape a course of action for the library's future. This plan will guide library staff in continuing to build a 21<sup>st</sup> century library of which the community can be proud.

Kent Free Library would like to acknowledge and express gratitude to those who contributed to this process, all of whom value and embrace the library's mission in serving the community. This process would not have been successful without their enthusiasm and willingness to share ideas.

### **Library Board of Trustees**

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*Approved by the Board of Trustees on April 16, 2015*