
Middletown Free Library

Growth in Our Community | A Strategic Plan
2017 - 2022

Information, Imagination, Ideas

MiddletownFreeLibrary.org

introduction

The MFL Story

MFL started as a small book bus in 1956 and has grown into a full size library, a makerspace and a hub of community learning welcoming over 20,000 people into its locally and nationally acclaimed programs

Mission

Help the people of our community achieve their full potential through the transformative power of information, imagination and ideas.

Vision for our Community

- Offer services and collections that will inspire interest, expand horizons and enrich perspectives
- Provide dynamic resources to help library users understand and engage in society
- Defend intellectual freedom and confidentiality of each individual user of the library
- Offer a wide variety of programs that engage in great exploratory conversations and the exchange of ideas
- Support early learning and the joy of reading
- Create new uses for library spaces, in keeping with the changing needs of library users, services, programs and interests
- Offer technology that allow users the opportunity to be creators not just consumers
- Offer services, collections and programs that unleash creativity and support research and problem solving

introduction

MFL's Key Assets

MFL is built around three key assets: people, place and platform

People

MFL serves as a hub of social activity, fostering new relationships, strengthening the community and welcoming civic engagement. It strives to actively involve the entire community. MFL facilitates learning and creation resources for children and adults alike.

Place

MFL is a welcoming, inclusive place for reading, communicating, learning, playing, meeting and working. Its design recognizes that people are not merely consumers but creators and collaborators. MFL's physical presence brings people together to strengthen community identity.

Platform

MFL is user-centered for the community to access tools and resources with which to discover and develop new knowledge. MFL enables sharing knowledge and innovation, and aims to be the “third place” for meeting, learning and creating.

introduction

Strategic Goals

Our Goals for growing our community from 2017 to 2022

01

Host Programs that Connect

> Create meaningful programs that connect with our users and partners by leveraging our collection and technology

02

Build the Community

> Great libraries build communities and MFL focuses on growing our community

03

Develop Broad & Deep Support

> Bolster MFL's growing needs by increasing private support to supplement public funding and diversify income sources

04

Strengthen the Staff & Volunteers

> MFL Staff, Board and Volunteers are key to MFL's success and growth

strategic goal

01: Host Programs that Connect

Create meaningful programs that connect with our users and partners by leveraging our collection and technology

Beyond books, MFL is where our community comes to get new ideas and to imagine what's possible. In Programs, Lectures and Workshops, we share information and create hands on experiences. A wide range of quality programming is a key strength that continues to be a priority for our growth.

- Continue to host highly-engaging and impactful programs - this is MFL's highest priority
- Experiment with new low-cost programs and analyze existing programs to determine better ways to diversify
- Increase number and variety of hosted programs
- Enhance programming for adults in their 20s to 50s
- Expand Makerspace and STEM/STEAM programming
- Increase physical space available to programming and events
- Provide virtual learning experiences with a physical presence in the community

strategic goal

02: Build the Community

Great libraries build communities and MFL focuses on growing our community

Community involvement and inclusion are key to our continued strength. MFL aims to be the focal point for learning and social collaboration in our community. As Middletown and the other areas we serve continue to grow and diversify, we strive to reach all members across the spectrum of our community.

- Harness MFL's program expertise to strengthen the community
- Align MFL services to support the community's needs today and beyond
- Leverage social collaboration for learning
- Partner with schools, museums, recreation departments, and other community resources to provide meaningful learning opportunities
- Collaborate with local schools to support coordinated learning and reduce out-of-school learning loss
- Continue to gather community feedback and input formally and informally
- Expand MFL's online communications strategy to create positive, high-profile awareness

strategic goal

03: Develop Broad & Deep Support

Bolster MFL's growing needs by increasing private support to supplement public funding and diversify income sources

MFL grows with the community so increased community support is key to our shared future. We seek to increase support from a broad cross-section of our community and encourage deeper relationships with donors. Support is not only financial but can be sharing a skill, volunteering, or making connections.

- Increase both our user patrons and supporting donors
- Share the MFL story and convey the scope of our mission, vision and success regularly to patrons, donors and the community
- Establish multiple revenue streams for stable, predictable annual funding
- Create a range of giving opportunities for donors to align with MFL's needs and programs
- Continue to build our development function and strategy to focus on major gifts, high-net-worth individuals, and corporate sponsorships
- Improve our relationship with sponsors and major donors and ensure their philanthropic interests are being met
- Strengthen our relationships with local government and build new relationships with community organizations that share MFL's mission
- Expand our revenue-generating community events including specialized workshops and themed events
- Continue to explore state and national grants and other funding opportunities

strategic goal

04: Strengthen the Staff & Volunteers

MFL Staff, Board and Volunteers are key to our Library's success and growth

The Staff and Volunteers are key to MFL's success. The MFL Staff must adapt rapidly and master new technology, services and programming to serve the community. Engaged Volunteers, including the Board of Trustees, are critical to help drive MFL's vision.

- Retain and hire a skilled Staff that is invested in the growth of MFL
- Continue the Staff's learning on emerging trends and innovations through conferences, workshops, collaboration with other organizations and similar learning opportunities
- Develop responsibilities, compensation, benefits and training to support a healthy, happy, productive Staff and workplace environment
- Ensure the Board stays well informed of current trends and data in order to provide meaningful governance and support
- Foster Board members who support the MFL with both financial donations and contacts in the community
- Grow our Advisory Committee to support MFL's evolving community needs
- Encourage our dedicated volunteers, among whom are our Board, to share their passion and skills

process

Sharing MFL's Focus

Clearly defining and well communicating the plan for growth have been goals at MFL. The three methods below were used to gather input and define the plan. This document is the starting point to communicating this plan.

Team Sessions

The Staff and Board met over multiple sessions to discuss the changes in our community and the new opportunities that MFL should serve.

Community Survey

MFL launched a broad community survey with 30-plus questions. The 300 responses reaffirmed the expectation; the community strongly supports MFL's continued growth.

Focus Groups

MFL invited 45 community members for discussions across three focus groups. A professional facilitator structured the discussion to dive deep into both what the community was looking for and perhaps more importantly why.

process

Community Involvement

Thank you to all the community members who contributed to this effort. Taking the survey, joining a focus group, providing feedback and comments after a program and more all helped refine the focus. MFL Staff and Board members involved are listed below.

Staff Members

Mary Glendening, Director

Laura Kuchmay, Adult Services Librarian

Jason Fialkovich, Youth Services Librarian

Julia Fernandez, Development Director

Contact Mary Glendening for additional information.

Board Of Trustees

Robert Fyfe, President

Parag Dalal, Vice President

Tim Sander, Treasurer

Patti Linden, Secretary

Carrie Reed, Advisory Council Member

Genny Hamilton, Friends Liaison

Betsy Podrebarac

Nicole Krom

Patricia Finegan

Dave Irving, Trustee Emeritus

“I drive 45 minutes past 2 libraries to come to MFL. **Quality programs** are worth the trip.”

User of CreateSpace @ MFL

Comment during Focus Group

thank you

Information, Imagination, Ideas

contact information

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facebook.com/MiddletownFreeLibrary

twitter.com/CreateSpaceMFL