

## LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

This was a year that brought many changes to the Library, most noticeably in our staff and to the outside of our building. Three staff chose to take advantage of the City's early retirement incentive, including several staff on the management team. As we wrote resolutions, hosted retirement parties, and bid farewell to our long term staff, we also spent time advertising, interviewing and hiring new staff with new experiences and new perspectives.

The grounds around the Library received a complete makeover during the summer, including a beautiful new Reading Garden, more benches, plants, trees, walkways and lighting. The renovation of the old front entrance created a stage to host library programs and a new ramp that provides an evacuation route from the second floor for patrons in wheelchairs.

Two bronze statues were installed on the Library grounds and over 100 engraved bricks were sold as part of our fund raising efforts for library improvements. The bricks were installed in the Reading Garden and the area was formally dedicated by the Mayor at a dedication ceremony on October 1, 2007, followed by a reception in the Library.

The highlight of our summer was our Harry Potter Extravaganza. Many local businesses participated in this special evening that included activities at locations around the Uptown Business Area. Children of all ages, parents, high school and college students and many adult Harry Potter fans participated in this event. It was a beautiful evening and our counts indicate that 3,000 people visited the Library between 6 p.m. and midnight. Liberty Bank for Savings provided \$1,500 to sponsor the Library's programs and the rest of the businesses in town contributed their own resources to make this a memorable evening.

Circulation of library materials continues to increase and this year we again broke all previous records, circulating 736,485 items, an increase of 3% over last year and 11% higher than five years ago. While circulation of our audiovisual materials continues to increase, books continue to be the most circulated items. Adult fiction circulation increased by 8% this past year.

We continued to add new books to the Library's collections for both adults and children, adding 23,277 new books during the year. An equal number of books were withdrawn to make space for the new titles as we continue to maintain our book collections at the 1998 level. 4,450 new audiovisual materials were added to the collection this year using funds from the Library's resources budget supplemented by grant and gift funds. To make room for these items we are withdrawing many videocassettes and books on cassette.

Renovation of the Young Adult Loft was completed in June and we have received many compliments on this attractive new area. Overall use of the Library by this age group continues to rise. We have increased the number of programs offered and circulation of library materials including both books and the new video games continues to rise.

We continued our efforts to bring the Library to the community by participating in numerous community events, including the Taste of Park Ridge, the Memorial Day Parade, Sidewalk Sale Days, National

Night Out and Earth Day. The Library participated in the Holiday Open House on the Friday evening after Thanksgiving and welcomed over 2,000 visitors between 6 and 9 p.m. Between Thanksgiving and Christmas we collected food in lieu of fines and donated the food to Kiwanis and the Maine Township Food Pantry. We also collected toys for the Police Department's Toys for Tots project. Staff visited local schools to encourage students to get a library card and use the library; we registered students for new cards at several locations.

The Board and staff revised our Strategic Plan to encompass two fiscal years and we made substantial progress towards completion of the goals. One of our major projects for this fiscal year was to conduct a community survey. The Board of Trustees selected the Public Opinion Laboratory at Northern Illinois University to conduct a random telephone survey of 400 adult residents. Trustees worked with the staff at NIU to develop the survey, and calls were made in the spring. The results of the survey will be presented to the Board of Trustees in June and will provide valuable input for future planning.

Staff was encouraged to participate in training opportunities within the library and by attending programs and workshops offered by our library system. A staff in-service day was held on Friday, February 29 and included training on new technologies and an introduction to a three month long training initiative called "All Wired Up" where staff learned about all types of technology, from blogs and wikis to instant messaging and downloading digital books.

In the spring we accepted bids for a new glass infill wall to separate the Reference Department work area from the public area and to replace the old shipping & receiving room doors with a window. These two projects will be completed after May 1.

On the following pages you can read more about the specific accomplishments of each department along with statistical reports on our many activities throughout the year.

I would like to thank the Library Board of Trustees for their dedication and efforts on behalf of the Library and the community, the Mayor and the City Council for their support of the Library's programs, services and collections. A special thank you goes to the Library staff that made all of our accomplishments possible.

Janet Van De Carr  
Library Director