

# CHELSEA

## district library

### Strategic Plan

## Outlook & Opportunity

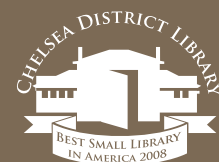
Planning Our Future



DeMea family, reading together in KidSpot

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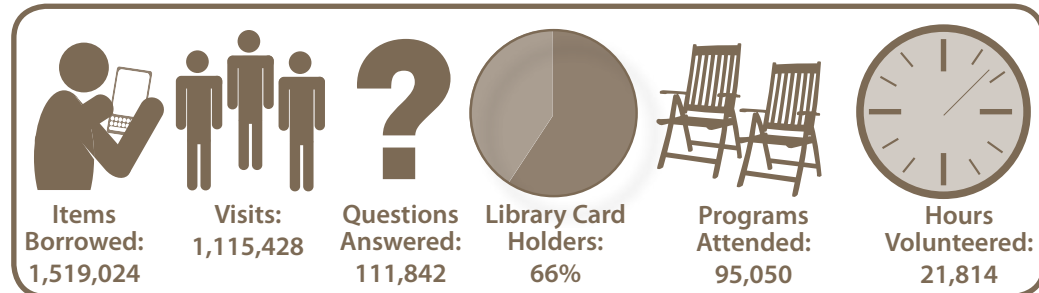
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# Director's CHAIR



The 21st century library exists right here in our community. Since moving into our new facility and reconnecting with our downtown roots, the Chelsea District Library has achieved a remarkable record as a respected, visionary, resourceful, and model public library—the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation *Best Small Library in America*, 2008. The new library, opened in 2006, has instilled a sense of civic pride in citizens throughout our community.

Clearly, Chelsea supports its public library! Statistics for circulation, visits, computer use, volunteer hours, and library card holders are extraordinary:



The current economic environment is negatively impacting public library budgets across the state, including our own. Our revenues have continued to fall in parallel with the decline in taxable value. Since 2010, the library has lost about \$112,000 in tax revenue. New threats to state aid to libraries and the elimination of the Personal Property Tax would result in an additional \$109,000 loss if there is no guarantee of replacement funds for local services.

### The Library Endowment

To ensure the library's long-term financial stability, an endowment fund has been established with a goal of \$200,000. A gift to this fund creates a legacy that will benefit Chelsea residents for years to come.

### With your support, we will continue to:

- Deliver pioneering programming that meets community needs
- Connect people and technology by staying in tune with our users and emerging users
- Deliver exceptional customer service in unconventional and innovative ways
- Initiate and expand partnerships and collaborations to utilize the creativity, networks, and expertise that exist in our community

### How Your Contribution Helps

Your contribution to the Endowment Fund is a gift that grows. The principal remains intact, while the interest income supports the programs and services you enjoy, promising a rich library experience for future generations.

### Contact

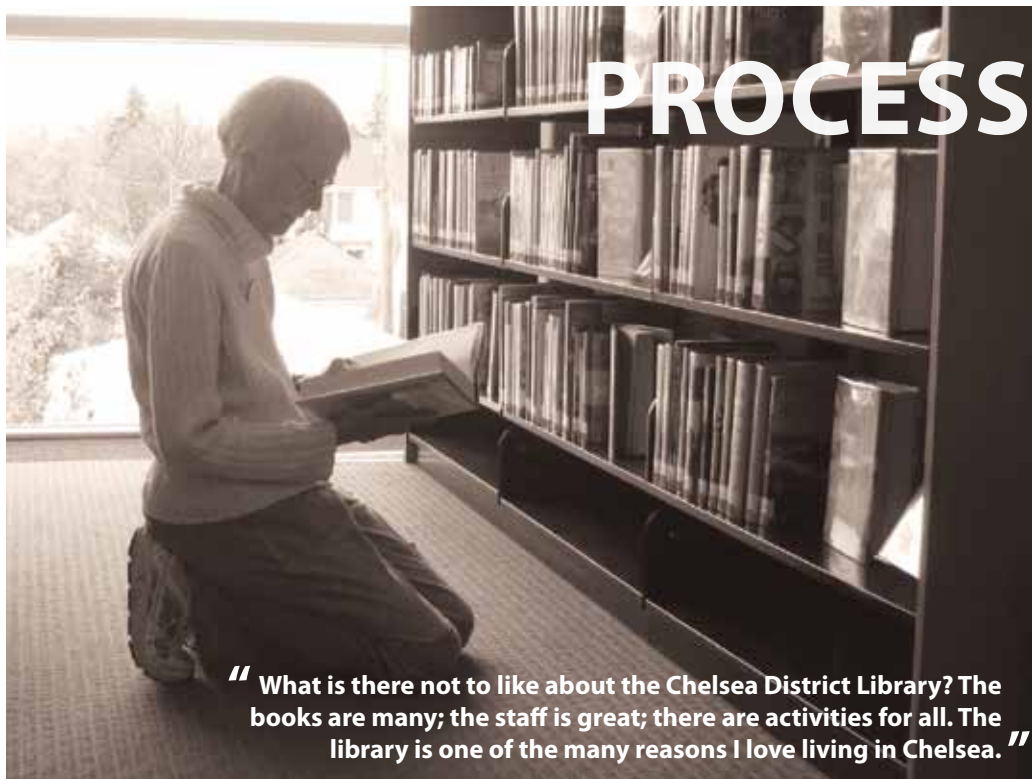
Library Board of Trustees can be reached through the board page on our website ([chelsea.lib.mi.us/libraryboard.htm](http://chelsea.lib.mi.us/libraryboard.htm)). For additional information about giving opportunities, please contact me, (734) 475-4268 or email [bharmer@chelseadistrictlibrary.org](mailto:bharmer@chelseadistrictlibrary.org)

### The Future

For the past several months, our staff has been working with the Library Board of Trustees to develop a vision for the library and identify ways to maintain our excellence over the next five years. I invite you to take a closer look inside and let us know what you think.

*William Harmer*

[bharmer@chelseadistrictlibrary.org](mailto:bharmer@chelseadistrictlibrary.org)



The library staff, through support from the Library Board of Trustees, launched a pro-active information gathering process to develop a long-range strategic plan for 2011-2015.

The planning incorporated the following phases:

Work by planning committee, including the library's management team, twenty-four staff members, and Library Board of Trustees.

Their tasks:

- Establish best practices in library services
- Identify major trends, especially technological, impacting public library service
- Review the City of Chelsea's Comprehensive Plan and data from the U.S Census Bureau
- Consult industry and community leaders
- Develop innovative plan of action

Work by a community advisory council, made up of more than 25 community leaders and advocates.

Their tasks:

- Serve as an advisory board for library staff and respond to plan of action
- Help match library services to community needs
- Identify service gaps for future planning and decision making

Public input, through a series of individual and group meetings, surveys, and focus groups.

The tasks:

- Identify satisfaction of current users and nonusers
- Express feedback, guidance, and concerns about library services
- Suggest additions to and extensions of existing library services



### **Research: Surveying the Landscape**

The library researched and analyzed many societal, cultural, and technological trends and issues affecting public libraries today to help develop future plans, including:

#### **Customer Service Expectations**

- Business world is raising the bar for fast, friendly, and efficient service
- Respond to demands from increasingly informed customers

#### **Reading Adversity**

- Recent studies, most notably by the National Endowment for the Arts, has shown that reading is declining in America
- Children and teens favor television and gaming to reading
- Circulation of books is declining in many libraries while computer use and media checkouts of audio and video materials are rising
- Library budgets are trying to encourage literacy habits while responding to demands for media

#### **Libraries as Community Centers**

- Role of the library as a communal space is being revitalized
- Programs addressing lifelong learning for all ages greatly enhance the library's relevance in the community
- Connecting with community organizations through outreach, partnerships and collaborations is a crucial component of the library as the heart of a vital community

#### **Media Revolution**

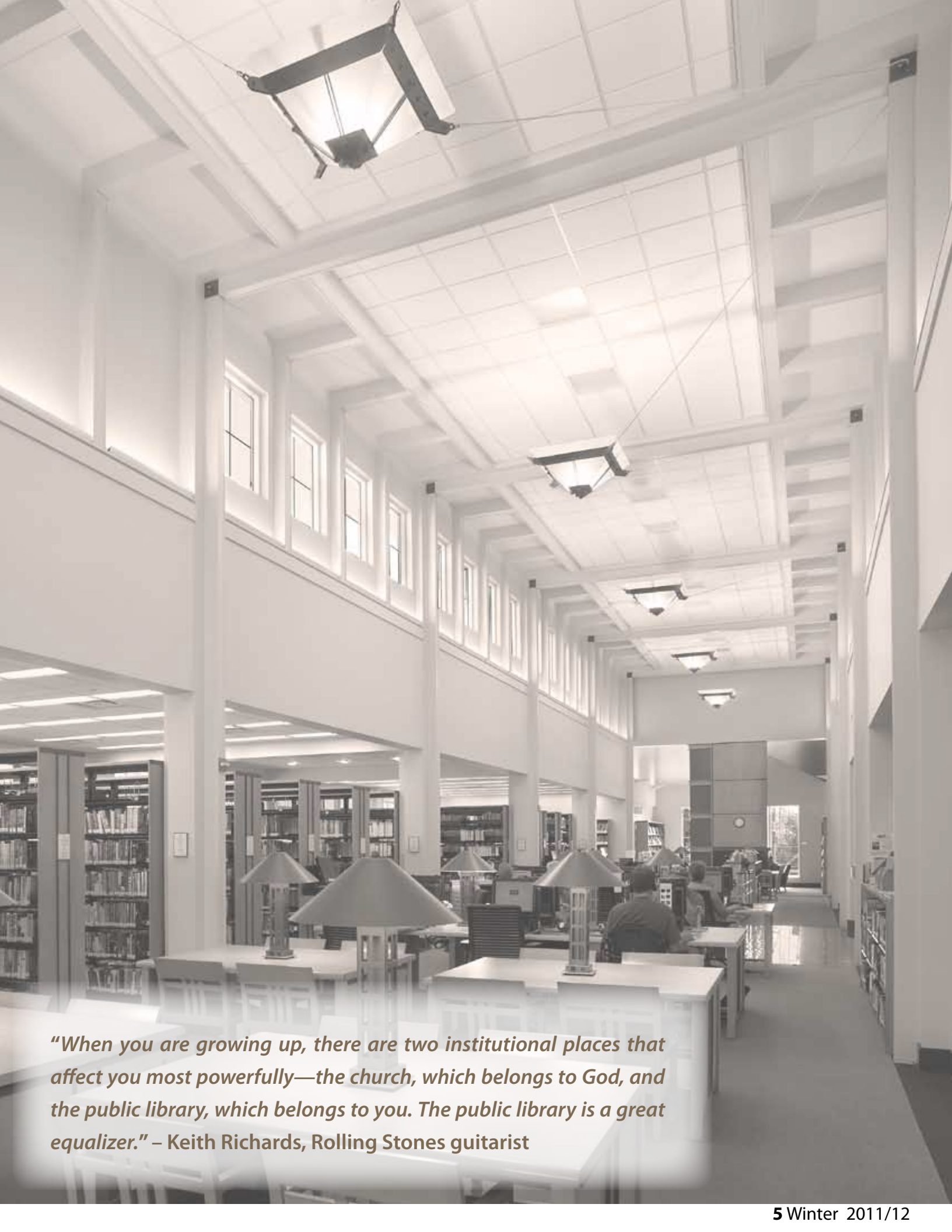
- Libraries are changing, especially media, with its ever-evolving formats and complexities
- New technologies like ebook readers and mobile devices are in demand by our public but taxing to the library's budget

#### **Information Literacy/Illiteracy/Early Literacy**

- Current research on early literacy and brain development indicates that it is never too early to prepare children for success as readers
- Public libraries have the vital tools to help prepare parents for this important responsibility
- Libraries help users navigate the digital world

#### **Teen and Senior Citizen Service Challenge**

- Libraries have increased efforts to design services to serve teens and seniors, traditionally under-served groups



*“When you are growing up, there are two institutional places that affect you most powerfully—the church, which belongs to God, and the public library, which belongs to you. The public library is a great equalizer.” – Keith Richards, Rolling Stones guitarist*



Americans consider libraries vital to the quality of life in their communities. National research from the Pew Internet & American Life Project (2007) and the Penn Fels study on the Economic Value of the Free Library (2010) indicate that people trust their public library and value it as a community center. Research also tells us that books and materials continue to be a primary motivation for library use, despite the fact that people remain unaware of the depth of many other library services and programs. A deep appreciation of library staff was another theme that we uncovered in our research; therefore, libraries need to maintain ongoing commitments to customer service. To address these opportunities and more, we have crafted five vision areas:

### **Customer Service**

- Deliver exceptional customer service in innovative ways
- Prioritize customer needs
- Develop best practices for delivering outstanding service

### **Quality Programming**

- Develop programming that meets community needs
- Strengthen community collaborations and partnerships
- Offer community something that no one else can

### **Outreach**

- Establish library presence throughout community via civic engagement
- Create a library experience that touches and connects lives

### **New & Emerging Technology**

- Identify emerging technologies that are a fit for the community and reasonable for staff to implement

### **Literacy**

- Encourage reading, writing, and interaction across a wide range of platforms, tools, and media
- Train staff to effectively locate relevant information for a personalized, useful customer experience
- Enhance the information experience



## Key Concepts and Initiatives

Our staff has been working in teams to develop a few key initiatives:

### Strategic Outreach

Partnerships and collaborations are essential to staying vibrant and connected. Perceptions of the library staff are highly related to library support; recognition that our staff is actively involved in the community is a strong indicator for support.

#### Objectives

- Identify common concerns, needs, and interests across community sectors to prioritize limited staff and financial resources
- Develop skills necessary to be effective, active facilitators and collaborators
- Encourage staff to get involved in the community

### Improved Customer Service

By seeing the world through the perspective of the customer, the library will strive to increase customer satisfaction and encourage return visits.

#### Objectives

- Create best practices for customer service
- Provide pro-active public service throughout the library
- Develop customer-friendly policies and procedures

### Enhanced Programming & Services

Our focus will be on the quality of programming to ensure that all programs and services have clear relevance to the community.

#### Objectives

- Design programs and services based on community needs
- Identify strategies for enhancing programs and services with the schools

### Enriched Collections

We will consider library holdings from the users' experiences with those materials.

#### Objectives

- Transition our collection philosophy to actively meet specific community needs
- Develop strategies for eBooks, digital content, and streaming media

### New & Emerging Technology

Implement new and emerging technologies that can be transformed into knowledge, learning, and usage.

#### Objectives

- Improve library website
- Encourage feedback via website
- Test new technology with focus group and surveys



# Postscript & Thank You

## **The Future Is Bright**

In many ways, people believe libraries are more essential now than ever. In Chelsea, there is agreement about the library providing an oasis from fast-paced, stressful lives. Public libraries seem almost immune to the distrust associated with so many other institutions. The community continues to rely on us for having a building that is well-maintained, with comfortable places to read, and enough friendly, knowledgeable staff to supply help when needed.

My dream as director of the library is for all of us to focus on a vision for the library that will be beneficial to all. After reading the highlights of our strategic plan, we hope that you are as excited as we are about the future of the Chelsea District Library.

## **Thank You**

The library could not have completed this work without the help of many hands. A lot of individuals contributed innumerable hours to help at every level to make the Chelsea District Library's strategic plan a success. We could not do it without them.

## **Chelsea District Library Board of Trustees**

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Janis Miller | Kathy Frisinger

## **Chelsea District Library Staff**

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