



**Rensselaerville Library  
Long Range Plan  
2017-2020**

Rensselaerville Library  
PO Box 188  
Rensselaerville, NY 12147  
518.797.3949  
Fax 518.797.5211  
[www.RensselaervilleLibrary.org](http://www.RensselaervilleLibrary.org)

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Kimberly Graff

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**Library Pages**

Ruby Acker

Keara Kelley

**Library Substitutes**

Emileigh Tanner

Leah Waldron

## **Mission Statement**

The Rensselaerville Library works to preserve a comfortable historical gathering place that is open, free and inviting. We strive to awaken and promote a life-long love of reading and learning by fostering personal connections and providing access to a stimulating variety of texts, technology and programming.

## **Library History**

Dating from 1798, this was the first Library in Albany County. It contained about 200 books which were kept in different parts of town, wherever space could be found. There were 186 original patrons. Today the Library collection includes over 16,000 items and over 600 card carrying members.

The Library was discontinued in 1832 and the present library was organized in 1896 as a “Reading Room” in the row house where it is today, the former boot shop of William Felter. Francis Conkling Huyck, Sr. purchased and renovated the building in 1906, adding the distinctive Tudor façade which was designed by the Felters’ son-in-law, Jacob Becker. In 1921 the Library was chartered as an Association Library by the State of New York Department of Education and charged to serve the entire Town and its hamlets. It meets current New York State Library standards and is a member of the Upper Hudson Library System.

Today, the Library’s collection includes fiction and nonfiction books, reference materials, periodicals, DVDs, audio books, downloadable resources, music, databases and access to millions more items through interlibrary loan. There are public access computers and Wi-Fi access that reaches beyond the Library walls. The collection also includes resources for the blind and hearing impaired, museum passes and fishing poles. The Sarah Prout Children’s area, named to honor the librarian who served from 1939 to 1971, continues to grow requiring in 2012 the addition of more shelving and a children’s computer.

In 1995 the Library more than doubled its space by acquiring the adjacent property from the estate of the late Vivian Anderson Borthwick who, at the age of 15, a high school student, was the youngest public librarian in New York State history. The Annexed area, named the Ann Ballinger Annex, provides room for the growing youth and media collections. The basement area provides space for an activity room and an early literacy room for children.

The original Library and Annex have undergone extensive renovations from 2002 to the present. Renovations have included a new circulation desk, computer room, a children’s area, improved lighting and access to the backyard. Work has also been done to make the building more accessible and energy efficient.

## **Library Description**

The Rensselaerville Library is the heart of our community. This unique resource serves as a focal point of contact in this rural area, providing intellectual and social enhancements that enrich the quality of life for children and adults alike. Besides providing traditional library services, the Library is often the

catalyst of other activities, workshops, lectures and events that keep alive the spirit of volunteerism and total community involvement.

### **Introduction**

In 2012 The Rensselaerville Library put forth a five year plan to improve service to the community. In 2015 we began to once again prepare for the Library's future through a long range planning process. In order to create a plan that covered all aspects of library operation and to fully address the community's needs, we sought to identify and review community needs for library services, evaluate current services and facilities connected to these needs, and to identify areas of improvement and potential new services to meet the identified community needs.

To ensure that the plan was representative of the diverse community the Library serves, it was vital to engage the community in this process, through surveys, focus groups and one-on-one discussions. This feedback from the community is the basis of the plan and informs the goals, objectives and action steps set forward.

### **Methodology**

An anonymous survey of the community was created to collect data on the demographics, library usage, remaining needs, of both library patrons and others within the community who do not access library services. This survey was widely distributed within the library's service area during the first quarter of 2016. Results were collected via Survey Monkey and were graphed and tabulated.

In April 2016, a focus group was facilitated by Upper Hudson Library System personnel and the results of this focus group were also collected and provided to the Board of Trustees to help guide this document.

These data were shared with the Board, reviewed, and between August 2016 and November 2016, the Board began regular meetings to analyze, discuss and formulate a long range plan that would address the needs expressed by the community.

The following plan is the result of this year long process. Throughout the document Library will refer to the Rensselaerville Library.

**Goal Statement #1: To continue to provide essential library services to the Town of Rensselaerville and neighboring towns and school districts, the Library will develop a sustainable funding plan.**

Objective #1: Private Funding - Develop a comprehensive financial plan for the Library's non-public revenue sources.

Action Step #1: Analyze the Library's fundraising efforts over at least the last three years and use these data to determine specific strategies for the future.

Action Step #2: In order to maximize revenue from private funding sources, develop an implementation schedule and resource allocation plan for diversification of investments, major donations, planned giving, etc.

Objective #2: Public Funding (school district) – Optimize Library funding through school district ballots.

Action Step #1: Seek a funding increase for the Library from the Greenville School District.

Action Step #2: Use a demographic analysis to explore the possibility of other school district funding within the Library's service area.

Objective #3: Municipal Funding (Town): Optimize Library funding through Town budget process.

Action Step #1: Enhance involvement with the Town Board by regular participation at Town Board meetings.

Action Step #2: Promote regular discussions between Town Board and Library Board for future Town funding for the Library.

**Goal Statement #2: The Library will improve and enhance access to library services.**

Objective #1: Revise Library service hours to be more accessible to the greater community.

Action Step #1: Conduct community survey to identify ideal service hours.

Action Step #2: Create staffing plan to facilitate changes to service hours.

Objective #2: Improve/enhance Wi-Fi access and digital technology.

Action Step #1: Update Library equipment to increase accessibility and bandwidth.

Action Step #2: Explore viability of hot spots in local public areas.

Action Step #3: Pilot the lending of a "hot spot".

**Goal Statement #3: The Library will build on its mission to serve as a center for community engagement.**

Objective #1: Improve Library services available to the Cooksburg, Potter Hollow, Preston Hollow, and Medusa hamlets.

Action Step #1: Analyze demographic details of service area and of each hamlet individually.

Action Step #2: Survey residents of each hamlet to assess needs.

Action Step #3: Develop a partnership with community groups in Cooksburg, Potter Hollow, Preston Hollow, and Medusa.

Objective #2: Improve community awareness of Library services and programs.

Action step # 1: Develop a marketing, branding and communications plan.

Action step #2: Develop a standardized protocol for advertising library events and programs.

Objective #3: Further engage community members to participate in Library programs and events.

Action Step #1: Develop and engage community members in a “community as collection” plan (community based programming).

Objective #4: The Library will model sustainability.

Action Step #1: Whenever possible the Library will choose sustainable options for its events, activities, services and programs.