VILLANOVA STUDENTS PRESENT STRATEGIC PLAN FOR FRIENDS OF LIBRARY

As part of their school program, graduate students from the Villanova School of Business assisted the Friends of the Chester County Library Board from September through December of 2019 in creating a roadmap for strategic direction over the next five years.

After three months of surveying, data aggregation, and client engagement, the team’s findings and deliverables included the following:

- A digital transformation plan for both Friends member and non-member outreach
- A new social media strategy
- Ways to improve funding for the FCCL, and thereby, the Library.
- The modernization of the newsletter

The five MBA students from Villanova University had a diverse array of working experiences and regional backgrounds. Jessica Akpan, Michelle Green, Kathryn Kelly, Krystal Paisley, and Eric Tannenbaum partnered with the Friends of the Chester County Library (FCCL) Organization to offer support and explore ways in which to help the FCCL achieve their goals and objectives.

The team identified areas in which the FCCL might improve, including increasing memberships, revenue growth, volunteer turnover, and customer relationship management as initial areas that needed improvement. From this, the students explored the potential for augmenting objectives regarding program awareness, future

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The next Friends Book Sale is scheduled for April 3, 4, and 5, 2020. Recent bestsellers and books in a variety of subjects including history, music, art, religion, romance, science, humor, sports, gardening, and crafts as well as music and movie CDs and DVDs will be available for purchase at bargain prices. A huge selection of children’s books will be available in a separate room. (Please note: we accept cash, checks or Paypal, but not credit cards.)

The sale starts on Friday, April 3 from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. for members of the Friends of the Chester County Library. All Friday night attendees must have a current membership before they get into line outside the Struble Room. Place-saving using boxes, crates, etc. is not allowed.

Memberships start at $15 for an individual and $20 per household and can be purchased in advance by mailing in the membership form (available at the Library or on the Friends website) or by purchasing a membership at the Library’s Main Checkout Desk prior to 4:30 p.m. on Friday night. Memberships can also be purchased on Friday night beginning at 5 p.m. at the membership table. Memberships can also be obtained on-line with a PayPal account. (Must be done prior to April 1 to attend the Friday night sale.)

The sale is open to the public starting on Saturday, April 4 from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Sunday, April 5 is Bag Sale Day, which takes place from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. We supply the bag; you fill it and pay $10. Show your current Friends membership card and pay only $7 per bag. For less than a whole bag, the books will be sold at half-price.

All proceeds from the Book Sale benefit the Chester County Library. Future Book Sales dates are October 9-11, 2020 and March 26-28, 2021.

The Friends would like to thank the many volunteers who work to make our Book Sales a success, and Rino’s Italian Restaurant and Pizzeria in Exton, and Carmine’s Parkside in Chester Springs for their support!
Are you reluctant to put a book on hold because you can’t get to the library during its regular hours? Fear no more! Thanks to donations from the Friends of the Library, the Outdoor HoldIt Locker is now available. This system allows customers the flexibility to pick up holds any time of the day or night, even when the library is closed. It is conveniently located just outside the front door of the Chester County Library.

To use the HoldIt Locker, you will need to know your library card number. You can enter it manually using the touch screen, or scan your card or the barcode stored in a mobile app on your phone.

Because space is limited, after you receive notice that your items are ready, you will only have 48 hours to pick-up your items. Your hold for items that are not picked-up on time will expire and those items will be cleared from the locker.

Also, any cardholder account status that would block you from borrowing items inside the library will also block check-out at the HoldIt Locker.

Note that the library special pricing policy for DVDs, e-games and audiobooks on Tuesdays does not apply when picking-up at the locker.

And remember, if you decide that the HoldIt Locker is not for you, you can still place your holds for pick-up indoors at the Chester County Library. Our indoor holds service will continue without change, allowing you 7 days to pick-up your items inside the library during regular business hours.

How to use the HoldIt Locker

- Choose the Chester County Outdoor HoldIt Locker as the pick-up location when reserving your items.
- Come to the library within 48 hours after you receive notice that your reserved items are ready.
- At the locker, select ‘Pick-up’ on the touch screen and enter your library card number by either typing in your number or scanning your library card.
- Your locker will open and the items inside are checked-out to you automatically.
- Select ‘Print receipt’ and ‘Finish’ to complete your transaction.
STRATEGIC PLAN

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book sale success, allocation of resources, future book sale sustainability, current membership engagement model, new membership acquisition, and overall revenue growth. Consideration was given to the FCCL’s available resources, which drove a narrowing-in on the areas of improvements that can be accomplished both in the short term (2020) and over five years.

The students interviewed board members and key library staff, and performed a benchmark analysis on similar Library Friends groups in the East Coast. Customer relationship software and Point of Sale systems were researched for potential to improve communications, better track sales and spending patterns, and provide an inventory solution that the FCCL currently lacks. The planning group reviewed data analyses and reports on the growth of libraries as technology advances and filtered the actions items to present to the FCCL board through the lens of Board member feedback, cost-benefit analyses, ease of use and ownership with the reality of limited volunteers and resources, implementation timelines, and finally feasibility of integration with marketing and membership outreach.

With a roadmap for success outlined, the Friends board is looking to put the strategy into action in 2020, to build value for the Friends members, the Chester County Library, its patrons, and all who are interested in contributing to the success of one of Pennsylvania’s best libraries.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS PROMOTED AT THE PENNSYLVANIA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE

By Samantha Bardarik

Thanks to a grant from the Friends of Chester County Library, last October I attended the Pennsylvania Library Association Annual Conference on the gorgeous bayfront in Erie. This conference is a fantastic opportunity for PA librarians to share innovative ideas and work together to enhance the roles of libraries in their communities.

Two big workshop themes this year were building community partnerships, and preparing youth to enter the workforce or higher education, especially targeting financial literacy. I have since gotten involved in Chester County workforce efforts to understand the county’s priorities in this area so the library can offer and align our resources accordingly. I’m hoping these initial connections will spur strong partnerships between the library and county workforce development initiatives.

As a result of connecting with other professionals, I came back with ideas to explore at CCL. I’ve shared many programming and time or money-saving ideas with my colleagues, including census resources and a potential topic (with supporting toolkits) for the Spring 2020 Lifelong Learning Institute at Immaculata.

I’m also currently exploring if and how different programming formats discussed throughout the conference, like book clubs and escape rooms, could apply to our business and career-focused patrons.

The conference was a wonderful professional experience, and I expect positive outcomes to occur at CCL from my time there.

**MEMBER BENEFITS**

**AS MEMBERS, YOU ARE IN A UNIQUE POSITION TO LET OTHERS KNOW ABOUT THE VALUE YOU RECEIVE, INCLUDING:**

- **ADVANCE NOTICE OF SPECIAL PROGRAMS**
- **SNEAK PREVIEW NIGHT AT BOOK SALES**
- **FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY NEWSLETTER**
- **COUPONS FOR FREE BOOKS FOR USE AT THE LIBRARY LOBBY SALES RACKS**
- **OPPORTUNITIES TO PLAN AND BE PART OF FUNDRAISERS AND SPECIAL EVENTS**
- **THE SATISFACTION THAT YOU CAN HELP THE CHESTER COUNTY LIBRARY CHANGE LIVES**

PASS ON THIS INFORMATION TO YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS. YOU’LL BE GLAD YOU DID!