



Introduction

The Clifton Park–Halfmoon Public Library conducted a survey in August 2019 to ask the public their opinion on community challenges, Library building space and Library programs and services. The survey was available on our website and in paper format in the Library from August 12 through September 3, and 888 people completed the survey. Participants were provided a choice of answers for some questions, while other questions were open-ended, inviting comments.

Participants

More Clifton Park than Halfmoon residents participated in the survey by a 3:1 ratio. Residents of surrounding towns were also represented. People of all ages completed the survey. The median age of a participant was in the range 55-64. Participants were regular Library users, with over 70% visiting the Library once a week or once a month. Over 70% of those visiting the Library did not feel there were any barriers to their Library use.

Library Principles

We reviewed survey answers in relation to the Library's principles which are outlined in our strategic plan. The principles are meant to be a guide and framework for the Library. They include:

- Practice responsible stewardship
- Provide safe and welcoming spaces
- Promote all forms of literacy
- Amplify community interests
- Support continuous learning

Amplify Community Interests

In the survey, participants were asked about community challenges and opportunities and how the Library might play a role.

More than a third of the answers expressed concern about growth in our area: traffic congestion, overbuilding of housing developments and retail buildings, and loss of park lands and open spaces. Participants felt we lack a sense of community and think we need to look for opportunities to share ideas and experiences with each other. Many felt that technology is having a negative effect on children. There were concerns over children's screen time and how that is affecting their ability to develop proper social skills.

When asked how the Library might play a part in addressing these issues, over 40% of respondents thought the Library should offer programs and events for all ages. Many commended the Library for the great variety of programs currently available. Others felt the Library's role is to provide space for meetings, study and community gatherings. We are viewed as a safe space providing opportunities for people in the community to come together. The Library wants to understand the concerns of our community so we can best respond as we strive to fulfill our mission to educate, enrich and entertain.



Promote All Forms of Literacy Support Continuous Learning

In the survey, participants were asked about their attendance at Library activities and programs. Those answering these questions indicated they use the Library for checking out various materials, quiet reading and study, access to a computer, and meeting with a community organization. Our most popular programs include author events, concerts, hands-on classes and computer classes. When asked what kinds of programs there should be more of, participants indicated hands-on classes, collaborations with institutions of higher education, computer classes, community conversations on difficult topics and multicultural programs, with a consideration for more evening and weekend program availability.

Practice Responsible Stewardship Provide Safe and Welcoming Spaces

Participants were asked about the use of the Library's existing space and potential additional space. 20% of respondents indicated they were pleased with the Library as is and didn't feel a need for change. Others suggested our space could be used more effectively by creating more meeting space and study rooms, offering programs using our outdoor space, and providing quiet reading space. If more space were available, respondents felt we should include a quiet reading room, more opportunities for community gatherings both large and small, more outdoor Library activities, and larger, more dedicated performance space.

Conclusion

We heard many welcome suggestions from those who completed the survey. We recognize the need for more space for quiet reading, study and meeting. We understand the interest in using our beautiful outdoor space for more programs. And, we appreciate the suggestions for different programming. We also thank you for your support and recognition of the programs and services we currently provide.

The results of this survey will help us as we move forward. We will continue to offer the best programs and services we can to meet the needs of our community. Thank you for your interest and participation.