



# Strategic Plan 2016-2018

## Introduction

The Caldwell Public Library's Strategic Plan is a plan that reflects the library's values and priorities. It will guide us as we embrace the changing role of public libraries in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Libraries are an integral part of the community, and this plan will strengthen the Caldwell Public Library's role as "The Heart of Our Town." When analyzing the feedback provided by the community, key themes emerged to help guide development of the Strategic Plan. During the next three years, Caldwell Public Library will focus on improving and expanding its collections, providing a comfortable space that reflects modern expectations and usage of libraries, continuing to develop strong programming for all age groups, and generating an increased awareness of the library's offerings. The library will be celebrating its centennial year in 2017 which will be a wonderful opportunity to showcase the library's history and local history collection. We hope that it will be yet another way to bring the community together to celebrate living in Caldwell.

## Planning Process and Inputs

The planning process began in June 2015 with the formation of a Strategic Planning committee which consisted of members of the Library Board of Trustees, the Caldwell Library Foundation Board of Trustees, library staff, and the library director. Community feedback was instrumental in forming the goals that the library hopes to accomplish within the next three years. Three focus groups were held at the library to allow community members an opportunity to discuss their thoughts on library services and included parents of young children, regular Caldwell Library users, and light to nonusers of the Caldwell Library. The focus groups were conducted by a neutral third party, Henry Khost, who has 30 years of marketing experience. This undertaking provided the benefit of having the voice of the people as a key ingredient in the formal planning of the course the Library will follow going forward. A pre-designed discussion guide was used to assure coverage of desired topics, but participants were allowed to discuss issues in whatever order evolved, with occasional steering guidance from the neutral moderator. Additionally, surveys were made available online, accessible through the library's website, and in paper form at the library's two circulation desks. The library director also conducted one-on-one interviews with seven community leaders, including:

Maria Burak, Director of Human Services  
Mary Cassels, Principal of Trinity Academy

June Cowell, Caldwell Merchants Association  
Beverly Crifasi, West Caldwell Historical Society  
Ann Dassing, Mayor of Caldwell  
Monsignor Desmond, Saint Aloysius Parish  
Dr. James Heinegg, Superintendent of Caldwell-West Caldwell School District

The Strategic Planning committee met throughout the planning process to review the results of the various inputs and to discuss how the library could respond. The strategic plan was then approved by the Library Board of Trustees at its January 21, 2016 meeting.

## Guiding Statements

### Our Mission:

The Caldwell Public Library's mission is to provide our diverse community with a wide array of literary, cultural, historical, educational and social resources through personal service and innovative programs utilizing a range of learning technologies in a welcoming environment.

### Our Vision for Caldwell Public Library:

The Caldwell Public Library will be a welcoming community space creating opportunities for all to participate, connect with others, and discover their passions by offering traditional and innovative library services.

## Core Values

We believe in:

*-Exceptional library service:* We are known for our friendliness and willingness to help with any request. We know our community and personalize the library experience.

*-Accessibility:* We are free and open to all. Everyone is welcome and treated with respect.

*-Passion:* We love the library. We love Caldwell. We love what we do.

*-Partnerships:* Our cooperative relationships with Borough departments, local schools, community organizations, businesses, and other libraries strengthen our services and make the most effective use of tax dollars.

*-Lifelong learning:* We believe that learning is not confined to the classroom. We will support the ongoing pursuit of knowledge and experience.

*-Preservation of the human record of Caldwell, NJ:* We are a repository for local history information. It is our duty to preserve these materials and make them available to the general public.

## **Goal 1: Promote lifelong learning from birth through adulthood.**

Objective 1: Inform and entertain our community with a varied calendar of programs.

Action Steps:

1. Establish a certain number of adult and children's programs to be held in the library each month.
2. Recognize the diversity of the community by providing more diverse programming.
3. Increase number of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) programs for both children and adults.
4. Provide regular "lunch and learn" type programs to inform and engage the community.
5. Collaborate with Saint Barnabas Medical Center to offer health topic programs to the community.
6. Collaborate with Caldwell University to offer educational programs on an array of topics.

Objective 2: Support parents, families and caregivers in their early learning efforts by increasing staff expertise and knowledge of Early Learning.

Action Steps:

1. Prioritize knowing the collections and databases to better assist patrons.
2. Explore co-partnering opportunities with the educational community.
3. Improve leveled early reader book labeling to more accurately reflect reading abilities.
4. Establish regular communication with local pre-schools and schools through monthly emails and classroom visits.
5. Promote Reading Buddies program to encourage growth and retention.

Objective 3: Increase personalized services to meet individual needs for research, information, reading suggestions, and technology assistance.

Action Steps:

1. List new titles on website.
2. Establish scheduled one-on-one time with a librarian.
3. Partner with schools regarding major research projects.
4. Promote and educate the public about databases provided by the NJ State Library, both through spontaneous interactions and scheduled demonstrations.

## **Goal 2: Create a comfortable space where the community connects, accesses library resources, and shares their stories.**

Objective 1: Enhance the patron experience and encourage library users to linger at the library.

Action Steps:

1. Research availability of low cost library space design.
2. Provide more soft seating/lounge furniture for meeting room with side tables and lamps.
3. Install new carpeting.

4. Install improved energy efficient lighting.
5. Provide and promote free wi-fi and reading materials on “the green” for residents to peruse while sitting outside the library.
6. Explore the option of establishing a café cart in the library.

Objective 2: Ensure that the library is properly equipped with furniture and equipment to facilitate patron access to new technologies and digital learning.

Action Steps:

1. Install integrated audio-visual system in the meeting room.
2. Create a laptop counter and increase the number of public computers.
3. Install new network cabling in the library to account for the increased number of computers and the new IP phone system.
4. Provide free technology training and classes on a variety of levels and topics.
5. Make new technologies available to the public.

Objective 3: Evaluate the physical structure of the building to ensure it is up to modern standards while maintaining the historic charm of being a Carnegie library.

Action Steps:

1. Remove old radiators that are no longer in use.
2. Install a handicap button at the front door of the library.
3. Enhance and maintain outdoor landscaping, hardscaping and building upkeep, including possibly powerwashing exterior and cleaning windows.

### **Goal 3: Provide library collections that support the interests of the community.**

Objective 1: Evaluate the library’s local history collection condition and policies to ensure maximum accessibility that is in line with ACRL/SAA’s “Joint Statement on Access to Research Materials in Archives and Special Collections Libraries”.

Action Steps:

1. Partner with Grover Cleveland Birthplace and the Historical Society of West Caldwell on programming and promotion of the local history collection.
2. Research costs and benefits of digitizing the entire local history collection with intent to secure funding.
3. Reach out to large and small libraries who have local history collections to use as a model to revise our current policies.
4. Revise current policies regarding access to local history materials.
5. Create a more welcoming and accessible space for the local history collection.
6. Purchase a new microfilm reader.

Objective 2: Evaluate the adult, young adult and children’s collections so that they meet both the recreational interests and educational needs of library users.

Action Steps:

1. Evaluate circulation statistics to guide collection development.
2. Conduct collection weeding on a regular basis.
3. Identify specific areas of interest to develop through community feedback/input.
4. Assess feasibility of broadening the digital media collections.

#### **Goal 4: Build partnerships that make a difference in people's lives.**

Objective 1: Involve the community and beyond in celebrating the library's centennial in 2017.

Action Steps:

1. Form a Centennial Committee to work on program ideas and promotion of the library's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
2. Continue and expand the "Sharing Our Stories" project and theme.
3. Create a "story book" by collecting people's stories about their time living in the Caldwell area or visiting the Caldwell Library. Put an ad out in all NJ newspapers and online sources asking people to send us their stories.
4. Lend out American Girl dolls to children that will include a journal that the children can write in about their time with the doll. These stories will be collected and published to contribute to the "story" of Caldwell.
5. Collaborate with schools on historical projects.

Objective 2: Encourage new people to take advantage of library services by getting library cards.

Action Steps:

1. Provide courtesy cards to all local business owners.
2. Establish regular class trip visits with students of Trinity Academy and offer courtesy cards to the students and faculty.
3. Offer quarterly incentives to sign up for a library card such as a free tote bag or a chance to win a gift certificate.
4. Explore possibility of establishing a Library Card Day to get discounts at local businesses.

Objective 3: Develop regular programming in partnership with the Caldwell Community Center, Senior Center, local schools, Caldwell Merchant Association, and other local community groups.

Action Steps:

1. Develop a strong Merchant Highlight monthly program in collaboration with the Caldwell Merchant's Association.
2. Establish a story time for Camp Caldwell kids during the summer. Coordinate with the Community Center for a joint Summer Reading Bash.
3. Maintain communication with the Senior Center to provide programming that is of interest to the senior population.
4. Identify other local community groups to collaborate with.

#### **Goal 5: Increase the library's profile in the community.**

Objective 1: Increase awareness of the library's services and programming in the community.

Action Steps:

1. Provide and promote programming on the availability of RefUSA and other valuable databases provided by the New Jersey State Library.
2. Establish regular schedule for promoting library events online.

3. Promote the library's upcoming events with local businesses and schools.
4. Increase the number of subscribers to the library's eNewsletter by promoting it at all events, at the circulation desks, and by word of mouth.

Objective 2: Increase the library's presence at community events.

Action Steps:

1. Participate annually in Art on the Avenue.
2. Encourage the Caldwell Library Foundation to become a sponsor of the annual Rotary/Kiwanis Street Fair.
3. Participate in Caldwell University orientation/back to school events/job fair.
4. Explore possibility of having a presence at the public schools back to school nights.

Objective 3: Work closely with the Caldwell Library Foundation to encourage more residents to join and support the Foundation.

Action Steps:

1. Support the Foundation in its fundraising efforts, including an annual appeal letter and gala.
2. Promote upcoming Foundation events in the library, on the library's website, and the library's social media sites.
3. Present new fundraising ideas to the Caldwell Library Foundation at their monthly meetings.