



Cortland Free Library

Books are just the beginning!

Annual Report to the Community
Year in Review: 2021

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1.0 Introduction

Welcome to Cortland Free Library's 2021 Year-in-Review, a written narrative of the highlights of our formal Annual Report to the State. Though it's in our rearview, there's much to learn from and be proud of as we recap the year that came before.

What is the Annual Report to the State?

Every year, every library in New York State must submit a report of the previous year's activities to the state. This Annual Report, according to the New York State Education Department:

- Provides an opportunity to **report on progress** in meeting the library's mission, goals, and objectives as identified in the board's long-range plan of service.
- Gives board and staff an opportunity to **review the past year's activities**.
- Provides an opportunity to **inform the community** of the library's activities and encourages community engagement.
- Offers an opportunity for **publicity and promotion of the library** with public officials and other stakeholders.
- Serves as a **resource for advocacy**.
- Furnishes **accountability** to community and funding sources.

The audience for this report includes:

- Library users, the general public, and community partners
- Board members, staff, and Friends of the Library
- Public and elected officials (local, State, and national)
- Media
- Current and potential funding sources (local, regional, and national)

2.0 Library Goals & Objectives / Long-Range Plan of Service

At the start of 2021, masked library staff members popped in and out of otherwise-closed doors on Church Street and Court Street to hand-deliver books, magazines, DVDs, games, and Take-and-Makes to waiting patrons via our "curbside" service. Soon, we were able to reopen those doors to a limited number of patrons so they could resume browsing, and not long after that, we were able to reintroduce in-person programming such as Miss Tammy's storytimes, while still following local, state, and federal COVID guidelines.

There's the day-to-day operation of the library, then there's the big picture. In our Long-Range Plan of Service (reviewed annually by a committee of library trustees and

community members), we detail and track big-picture library goals and accomplishments to make sure we never lose sight of them, even amid a pandemic. Here are some ways Cortland Free Library continued to meet its goals in 2021:

- **Buildings and Grounds**
 - **Goal:** *To provide a safe, comfortable, welcoming, and accessible environment for patrons and staff.*
 - **What we did:** Created a much-needed private meeting and programming room by relocating the director’s office from the northwest corner of the building office to the almost-adjacent, smaller business office. This accessible space can be reserved and is also available on a first-come first-serve basis to individuals and groups.
- **Marketing and Community Relations**
 - **Goal:** *To increase awareness and use of the library through various brand-building, marketing and communication channels.*
 - **What we did:** We continued to use social media and word-of-mouth to raise awareness of the library.
- **Development and Grants**
 - **Goal:** *To increase financial support of the institution through a range of development and fundraising strategies and tactics.*
 - **What we did:**
 - We introduced a “What’s Your Story?” targeted campaign.
 - We converted the space in the elevator foyer on the main level to an ongoing book store: The CFL Book Shoppe.
- **Board of Trustees**
 - **Goal:** *To recruit and retain a skilled, motivated, engaged, and diverse Board of Trustees to provide high-level oversight of the Library’s finances, personnel, operations, and programming in accordance with accepted best practices, New York State and Federal laws pertaining to 501c3 non-profit organizations, and NYSED requirements for Libraries.*
 - **What we did:**
 - We welcomed a new board member: Julie Campbell.
- **Finance and Investment**
 - **Goal:** *With a view to fulfilling the Library’s mission, long-term sustainability, and warranting the public’s trust, continuously seek to optimize the Library’s finances through legal, ethical, and transparent fiduciary best practices.*
 - **What we did:**
 - Our Finance and Investment Committee continues to do this.
- **Personnel**

- **Goal:** *To support the Library Director in building and maintaining a team that meets the needs of our patrons while fostering a work environment that encourages excellence, passion for the library’s mission, creativity, and job satisfaction.*
 - **What we did:**
 - We continued to hold regular staff meetings and the Library Director conducted regular check-ins with staff.
- **Programs, Services, and Collections**
 - **Goal:** *To provide timely, relevant programs, and to increase the level of service provided to patrons so that they leave the library inspired, heard, and empowered to move forward.*
 - **What we did:**
 - Staff completed Librarian’s Guide to Homelessness training via Niche Academy.
- **Emergency Preparedness**
 - **Goal:** *To develop plans and policies to facilitate continued operation during and/or recovery from threats to the library.*
 - **What we did:**
 - Ongoing new policy and plan implementations during the COVID-19 pandemic
- **Technology**
 - **Goal:** *To utilize and provide technologies that will position the library to achieve its mission and its patrons to be successful in the 21st century.*
 - **What we did:**
 - Phone system was replaced with Nextiva (VOIP), including auto-attendant and options to leave voicemails at each extension.
 - New time management system enables employees to clock in and out from mobile app or desktop and has eliminated the need for paper timesheet submissions.

3.0 Quantitative Statistics

The statistics presented below are the ones in which we think you’ll be the most interested and are also those that are reported to the public in an annual infographic. If you’d like to take a look at the complete Annual Report including all of the statistics, please visit this link to the complete Annual Report to the State: <https://www.flls.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/CORT-FINAL.pdf>.

You’ll see that our numbers are up across the board from last year, however the number of recorded children’s programs decreased (this was because we were able to offer

more in-person programming in 2021 compared to 2020) as did the number of young adult programs and young adults engaging in programs. The library is working towards ways to create a dedicated teen space and to provide appealing programming for teens, with feedback from our Teen Advisory Board.

Annual Community Infographic Report					
Comparison by Year	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Registered Cardholders at Cortland Free Library	8,429	8,048	8,688	9843	9931
Visits to Cortland Free Library	38,185	30,194	83,432	87546	92560
Inter-Library Loan items sent and received	22,978	16,917	25,786	25787	25,968
Total materials (print and electronic) used by patrons	86,263	76,871	124,968	122,782	129,861
Patron uses of Wi-Fi at Cortland Free Library	4,484	1,019	4,624	5223	6835
# reference questions answered by staff	1,900	1,515	2,049	2408	2870
# early literacy program sessions	187	48	426	375	352
# attended early literacy program sessions	4,359	1065	13,075	14096	10851
# adult programs	87	47	245	204	225
# attended adult programs	611	401	2,713	2,035	2390
# children's in-person and virtual LIVE programs	154	71	311	294	279
# attended children's in person and virtual Live programs	3460	1,542	12,967	13,492	12303
# recorded children's programs	81	257	n/a	n/a	n/a
# young adult programs	13	20	48	43	59
# attended young adult programs	65	156	249	564	2631

4.0 Grants, Fundraising Activities, Capital Projects

The library applied for and was awarded the following grants in 2021:

- **Early Literacy Mini Grant by the Finger Lakes Library System:** \$250
- **Rosen Grants by the Community Foundation of Tompkins County:**
 - Ready, Set, Read! And Homeschool Get Ready to Read: \$6,227
 - Summer Reading Program: Tails & Tales: \$7,232
 - 4th and 5th Grade Book Club: \$1,200
- **Ralph R. Wilkins Foundation Grant** for preschool and crafty kids Take & Make programs: \$1,700
- **Bullet Aid from Assemblymember Kelles:** \$5,000

The library also conducted a fundraising event called “What’s Your Story” during which prior donors were asked to share their library stories. This campaign raised \$1,600 in unrestricted funds.

Other activities in 2021 included a summer book sale and a winter book sale held by our Friends of the Library group.

Thanks to the Marketing and Development Committee for also helping to develop a new bookplate design and fundraising initiative!

5.0 Community Partnership Activities

2021 community partners and initiatives included the following:

- **Cortland County Historical Society:** Time Travel program.
- **Cortland Youth Bureau:** summer partnership for outdoor storytimes at Suggett Park, Courthouse Park.
- **Cortland County Mutual Aid:** Really Free Markets held at the library through the winter.
- **Cortland Prevention Bureau:** Seeds of Hope giveaway.
- First Fridays with various **local artists** (David Beale, Molly Andrejko); **Cortland Childhood Council; Cortland Arts Connect.**
- **Hospicare:** *How to Make a Death Binder* webinar.
- **Loaves & Fishes:** The Great Giveback in November.
- Outreach with **Racker Center, CAPCO.**
- **Seven Valleys Health Coalition:** Composting education kit distribution and webinar.
- Speaking engagements with the following:
 - **AAUW**
 - **Rotary**
- **SUNY Cortland *Little Thinkers Curious Minds*** virtual program collaboration.

6.0 Return on Investment

There’s a huge return on investment (ROI) when it comes to the library. For example, based on her home’s assessment, Library Director Jen Graney pays just \$55 a year in library taxes. She currently has 25 items checked out on her card.

For one month alone, if she had purchased the books instead of borrowing them from the library, that would have been a cost of at least \$425. Over the course of one year, she saves thousands of dollars. Other patrons who attend library programs, utilize reference materials, etc., can realize an even larger ROI.

Here's how you can calculate your individual ROI:

- Find out what you pay per year in library taxes.
 - Not sure? You can look it up here:
<http://www.taxlookup.net/index.aspx?county=cortland> then when you find your property, click "Show Levy Details."
- Calculate the value of services you take advantage of at the library:
<https://www.nyla.org/library-use-value-calculator-values/>
- Comparing the two numbers will give you your ROI.

7.0 Library Contact Information

Library Director:

Jen Graney

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Library Board President:

John Hoeschele

cfltrustees@gmail.com

8.0 Giving Thanks

Thank you to our regular volunteers in 2021, Georgette Ogle (book repair) and Nancy Snedeker (shelf work in Adult Services). Thank you to all of our generous donors. And thank you to our dedicated staff, board of trustees, and of course you: our library patrons. Here's to another year of supporting you through library collections, programs, and other initiatives in 2022.

Submitted by JLG

March 2022