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# STRATEGIC PLAN

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BOGOTA PUBLIC LIBRARY  
2019-2021

*Tiny. Mighty.*

# THE PLAN

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This Strategic Plan is a roadmap for library services through 2021. While the library aims to meet all objectives put forth, the plan will be adjusted to address emerging opportunities and community needs when necessary.



# THANK YOU

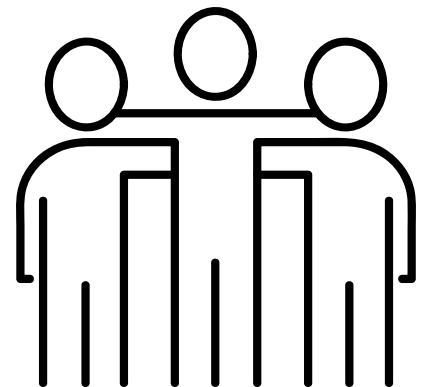
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Bogota Public Library thanks the Borough residents, community leaders and library staff who attended a focus group or responded to our survey. Their input was a valuable part of our planning process.

# THE COMMITTEE

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Joanne Cursinella, Library Trustee  
Carmen Diaz, Library Trustee  
Dr. Faith Samples-Smart, Library Trustee  
Chelsea Dodd Coleman, Library Director  
Alicia Pugh, Library Assistant  
Tommy Skrnich, Youth Services Coordinator



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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In May 2018, the Bogota Public Library Board of Trustees assembled a committee to develop a Strategic Plan that positions the library to address the anticipated needs of Bogota residents for the next three years.

During the first phase of the project, the committee revised the library's Mission and Vision Statements and developed new Core Values. The committee also analyzed the library's strengths, weaknesses and opportunities, as well as assessed potential opportunities and threats in the current environment.

Under the direction of Dr. Faith Samples-Smart, Library Trustee, the Strategic Planning Committee hosted three focus groups to identify community issues. Chelsea Dodd Coleman, Library Director, also interviewed Bogota Mayor Christopher Kelemen for his input. Finally, the committee surveyed library users via online and paper/pencil surveys.

The community profile was completed with a review of the most recent census data (i.e. 2010) and 2016 estimates, along with library usage statistics for the last three years. Using this research, the committee identified "service priorities" or typical library services that would be provided in response to the community's needs and expectations.

The committee carefully evaluated the critical resources required for the successful provision of each response against Bogota Public Library's current and anticipated financial resources, building facilities, technology, existing collection and staff expertise. After much deliberation, the committee developed service priorities that will become the library's focus.

The committee created objectives for each of the five key service priorities and action steps through 2021. In order to determine the success and effectiveness of the various action steps, benchmarks were constructed to measure the progress of the plan. The Strategic Planning Committee will meet on a quarterly basis throughout the lifespan of the plan to reevaluate and adjust the library's objectives as necessary.

# WHO WE ARE

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## *Our Mission*

To maximize our community's potential through exploration, education and empowerment.

## *Our Vision*

To be the common thread bringing family and neighbors together for a lifetime of learning and enjoyment.

# WHAT WE VALUE

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## *Welcoming Environment*

Staff and patrons have a home that radiates helpfulness and acceptance.

## *Creativity*

Imagination and ingenuity are at the heart of what we do.

## *Positive Community Relationships*

We recognize the importance of outreach to nurture rapport with our community.

## *Lifelong Learning*

Our programs and services connect people with knowledge, ideas and experiences.

## *Fiscal Responsibility*

We practice efficiency and care to ensure proper use of library funds for greater sustainability.

# METHODOLOGY

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The Strategic Planning Committee used two main methods for researching community needs and current public perceptions of the Library: focus groups and a community survey.



## FOCUS GROUPS

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The library undertook a community needs assessment to gauge its strengths and to determine gaps in services. Three focus groups in June 2018 gathered thoughts from Borough seniors, business and community leaders, and staff.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY

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A survey was conducted throughout June 2018 in English and Spanish. The survey was available online and in print for both languages.



# FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

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Focus groups were facilitated by Dr. Faith Samples-Smart and audio taped for accuracy. Groups responded to approximately ten open-ended questions over a period of one hour.

Key findings reveal that the library is perceived as warm, welcoming and a community hub. Staff are viewed as friendly, helpful and knowledgeable. Space, noise and youth engagement are problematic, and the seniors want more integrated programs during day time hours. Business owners believe the library can benefit more from local talent to entertain, educate and draw the broader community to the space.

For the full summary of results, see Appendix A.

## *Key Strengths*

- Community-oriented
- Warm/welcoming
- Energetic environment
- Knowledgeable staff
- Cohesive work environment
- Great customer service
- Array of quality programs for all ages
- Improved program attendance
- Spanish-language materials

## *Areas for Improvement*

- Senior engagement
- Youth engagement (beyond social gathering space)
- Space/expansion
- Need for quiet space
- Promote new book releases to seniors

## *Reasons for Lack of Library Use*

- Time
- Access to technology (i.e., easy to find some material online)
- Lack of information about program and services

## *Recommendations*

- Promote local talent to draw and educate broader community
- Utilize passive programs to engage youth during after school hours
- Use 2nd floor for circulation and staff use, and for youth programming or quiet space after school
- Improved communication with municipal officials to avoid scheduling conflicts

# SURVEY RESULTS

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An online and pencil/paper survey was conducted in June 2018. A sample of nearly 200 library patrons completed the survey. Of those, respondents between the ages of 36 and 65 were disproportionately (56%) represented. Ninety percent (90%) of all respondents have library cards, and 89% rated the library as "good" or "excellent." Nearly one-third reside outside of Bogota.

Among those who reported infrequent visits to the library (55%), the most common reasons were the absence of Museum Pass and Spanish-Oriented programs, a developed graphic novel selection and a larger quiet room. The following responses are not mutually exclusive and represent patrons' selection of multiple response options. When asked of their interest in or desire to learn new information or how to do a specific task, the majority reported in the affirmative. In contrast, a disproportionate number indicated limited interest in meeting with or engaging in activities with others.

## *Highest Overall Rating*

Customer Service  
Hours of Operation

## *Poorest Overall Rating*

Library Collection  
Facilities

## *Top Topics of Interest*

Book Discussions	Home/garden
Crafts	Theatre/Movies
Cooking/Dining	Travel

## *Program Suggestions*

Biography	Finance
Foreign Languages	Genealogy
History	Home Repair
Music/Live Shows	Pets

## *Preference for Program Times*

Weekday evenings  
Saturday mornings

## *Preference for Communication*

Email

## *Selected Comments*

Bathrooms need updating  
Staff should enforce no cell phones  
More emphasis on "1000 Books Before Kindergarten" program  
Video game loan period should be longer  
There should be a larger collection of audiobooks

# BOROUGH OF BOGOTA

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Bogota, New Jersey is a borough of 8,567 residents in the southeastern section of Bergen County. It borders Hackensack on the west, Teaneck on the north and east, and Route 80 and Ridgefield Park on the south, making it an ideal location to call home.



## INCOME

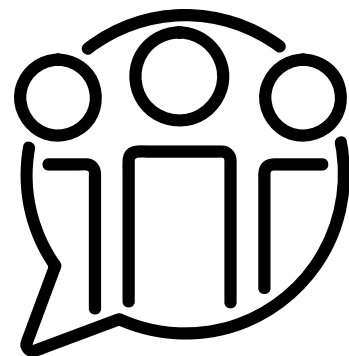
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The largest income bracket is between \$75,000 and \$99,000, with 50% of households earning between \$50,000 and \$149,999. Almost 10% of residents live below the poverty line, and 8.8% of households receive cash public assistance income or SNAP benefits.

## ORIGINS & LANGUAGE

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More than 42% identify as Hispanic or Latino, and a third of Bogotians are foreign-born. Nearly 31% of all resident adults speak Spanish at home, and 24% of this group speak English less than “very well.”





# SCHOOLS

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Bogota has two public elementary schools, one public high school and three private schools. Approximately 15% of the population is enrolled in kindergarten through high school.



# EDUCATION

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Just over 30% of those 25 years and older have earned a Bachelor's degree or higher. The highest educational attainment grouping for this age-set is "High school graduate" at 32.7%.

# COMMUTERS

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Three quarters of workers commute by car and 21% use public transportation. Very few walk or bicycle to work, or work from home. Estimates also reveal that 30% commute to another state.



*Median age  
is 38*



*11.5% are over  
65 years of age*



*50% of housing was  
built before 1939*



*32% of housing  
is renter-occupied*

# THE LIBRARY

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Bogota Public Library (BPL) was officially founded in 1916, seven years after its informal start. Library members today have access to thousands of materials, and over a million more throughout the Bergen County Cooperative Library System, which is comprised of 77 libraries.

The Library caters to users of all ages by offering a diverse multitude of daily, weekly, and monthly programs. Open six days a week for a total of 52 hours, BPL also serves as a Passport Acceptance Facility earning additional income from passport application fees.



*building size:  
3,600 sq. ft.*



*open 52 hours  
each week*



*number of staff:  
4.5 fte*



*saves Bogotians  
\$409/year*

## *2017 Service Statistics*

56,564 items circulated  
7,200 public computer sessions  
3,966 WiFi sessions  
7,020 reference transactions  
4,209 resident cardholders

## *2017 Programming*

351 programs for children  
119 programs for young adults  
427 programs for adults  
7,840 total program attendees

## *2017 Materials & Resources*

26,935 print books  
350 audiobooks  
4,009 DVDs & Blu-Rays  
113 videogames  
55 newspaper/magazine subscriptions  
25 electronic databases through the  
New Jersey State Library  
18,001 eBooks through BCCLS  
6,905 eAudiobooks through BCCLS  
247 digital magazines through BCCLS

# STRENGTHS & SUCCESSES

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## *Passport Acceptance Facility*

Other than Annual Appeal fundraising, passport services are one of the few ways that a public library can make significant income without any effect on the tax base. BPL is fortunate to be one of the few libraries to offer this service since 2015. The library collected \$39,291.95 in passport fees from 1,374 applications in 2017; 16%

Passport application numbers through June 2018 are 30% higher than the same time last year. With the rise in the passport execution fee, BPL is poised to bring in twice as many additional funds in 2018. As important as the extra funds generated by passport fees are, the trustees are mindful that these funds are not guaranteed year to year.

## *Customer Service*

Library staff is complimented daily by patrons for our welcoming and helpful attitudes. As a Passport Acceptance Facility, this has been crucial in growing this service. Many non-Bergen county residents opt to travel to Bogota for passport processing and cite our reputation as the reason.

## *Youth Material Circulation*

Youth material circulation has increased 46% since 2014. With the renovation of the children's area, including a lifelike tree memorial and new shelving, and a designated corner for young adult fiction more life has been breathed into youth literacy. The total circulation of the library's collection, including electronic items, is up 6.36% overall.

## *Programming*

Following a short drop in program attendance in 2015 and 2016, the attendee count per program has gone from 7.8 in 2014 to 8.7 in 2017. Summer Reading enrollment is also up 109% with 300% more books logged during the program.

# CHALLENGES

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## *Borough Financial Support*

The greatest challenge faced by the library is the economic inability to provide many of the recommendations identified in the Strategic Plan focus groups and surveys. A majority of the complaints recorded are a direct result of perpetual financial austerity caused by underfunding.

The Borough of Bogota supports the library at the minimum allowable amount under NJ law (N.J.S.A. 40:54-8). Out of 46 libraries in New Jersey with a population of 7,500 to 9,500 or with the state mandated minimum funding level of +/- 20% that of Bogota, BPL has the seventh lowest total funding according to 2017 statistics. Libraries receiving extra tax support are funded an average of 16% higher than the required minimum.

Additionally, towns provided an average of \$56.53 per resident in library funding while Bogota provides only \$29.34.

## *Space*

Space continues to be an issue. Using the same parameters as above, BPL has the 9th least amount of square footage of the 46 libraries. With only one floor, the library has 4,248 less square feet than the average 7,848 of the other libraries.

## *Low Collection Turnover Rate*

The library's turnover rate, or the number of times each item would have circulated during the year if circulation had been spread evenly throughout the collection, has steadily decreased since 2014. This, combined with a 19% decrease in circulation partially due to delivery troubles in early 2018, presents the library with an opportunity for greater improvement.

# SERVICE PRIORITIES

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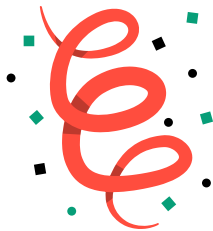
## *Goal One*

Secure greater financial support from the Borough and the community.



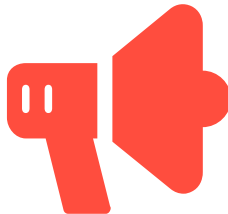
## *Goal Two*

Rejuvenate the library's collection to reflect a rapidly-evolving world.



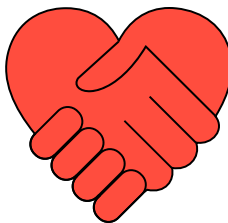
## *Goal Three*

Celebrate Bogota's history and enable our community to access its past.



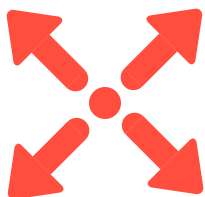
## *Goal Four*

Reinforce the BPL brand with a clear marketing communications plan.



## *Goal Five*

Amplify library outreach to foster deep-rooted relationships with community organizations and businesses.



## *Goal Six*

Expand library programming to excite current patrons and to attract new library users.

# GOAL ONE

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**Secure** greater financial support from the Borough and the community.

## *Objective 1.1*

Ensure that all members of the Borough Council are aware of the services and activities provided to all Bogota residents by the library. Ensure that the Borough Council is aware of the library's inability to meet the literacy needs of the community without additional ongoing funding.

## *Objective 1.2*

Increase promotion of Passport Acceptance Facility services to boost income.

## *Objective 1.3*

Appeal to the community twice a year to communicate challenges, goals and the need for additional financial support.

## *Measuring Success*

1.1—The Library should be a regular presence at Borough Council meetings with either the Library Director or a Trustee attending meetings at least six time per year. Council members should receive information, either by email or in person, concerning the programming provided to residents by the library.

1.1—Be funded at a rate higher than the 1/3 mill by 2020.

1.2—Include information about Passport Acceptance Facility services in digital and print communication once every three months.

1.3—Conduct a robust Annual Appeal every November/December, and a smaller Spring Appeal every April.

# GOAL TWO

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**Rejuvenate** the library's collection to reflect a rapidly-evolving world.

## *Objective 2.1*

Build the Spanish collection with modern items available for circulation within BCCLS.

## *Objective 2.2*

Restructure juvenile materials into a system that will enable kids to find fiction and nonfiction picture books by topic.

## *Objective 2.3*

Maintain a regular evaluation schedule to ensure continuous refreshment of the collection.

## *Objective 2.4*

Increase the turnover rate of the collection, which is currently at 1.45.

## *Measuring Success*

2.1—As of July 2018, there are 580 books in the Spanish collection with 21% discoverable by browsing because they are not in the catalog. By December 2021, the collection should be doubled with less than 5% uncataloged.

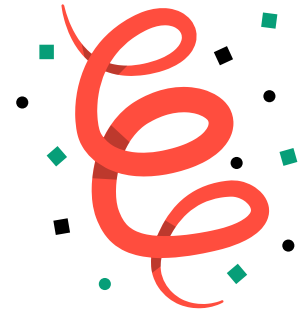
2.2—Develop a plan for converting juvenile books to a more easily discoverable shelving scheme by August 2019. Complete the re-labeling and relocation of materials by August 2020.

2.3—Develop an evaluation schedule by January 2019. Monitor the schedule's designated collection areas on a monthly basis.

2.4—By December 2021, the collection should have a turnover rate of 2.00+.

# GOAL THREE

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Celebrate Bogota's history and enable our community to access its past.

## *Objective 3.1*

Develop an archive for local history materials, including historic library records.

## *Objective 3.2*

Develop finding aids for this collection for use by the general public.

## *Objective 3.3*

Celebrate Bogota and local history with displays and programs.

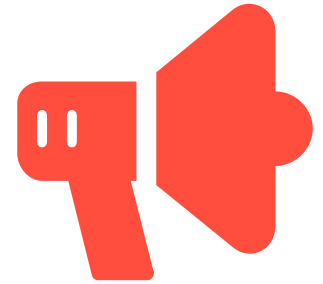
## *Measuring Success*

- 3.1—Index and properly label materials by April 2019.
- 3.2—Publish finding aids in print and on the website by October 2019.
- 3.3—Host at least two local history talks per year beginning in 2019.
- 3.3—Display archive materials at least twice a year beginning in 2020.



# GOAL FOUR

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Reinforce the BPL brand with a clear marketing communications plan.

## *Objective 4.1*

Design a new logo to better represent the library's brand.

## *Objective 4.2*

Develop branding guidelines to ensure cohesive communications.

## *Objective 4.3*

Create an event promotion strategy to be used by all staff.

## *Objective 4.4*

Build eNewsletter subscription list and employ strategy for content.

## *Measuring Success*

4.1—Replace current logo with a new logo by January 2019.

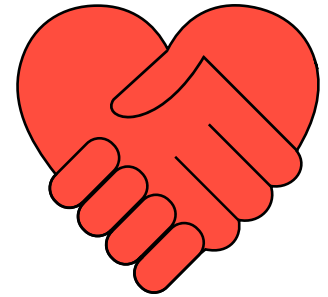
4.2—Implement branding guide for staff use by March 2019.

4.3—Have an event promotion strategy in use by March 2019.

4.4—Create a variety of email lists for subscribers to select from and develop eNewsletter editorial calendar by May 2019.

# GOAL FIVE

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**Amplify** library outreach to foster deep-rooted relationships with community organizations and businesses.

## *Objective 5.1*

Host quarterly committee of local organizations to encourage sharing of events.

## *Objective 5.2*

Develop schedule for communication with local businesses and for dissemination of business resources.

## *Objective 5.3*

Work with the Board of Education to ensure every child enrolled has a library card.

## *Objective 5.4*

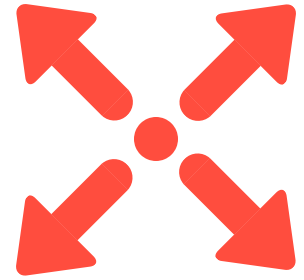
Provide support to the BPL Friends of the Library to increase its productivity and fundraising.

## *Measuring Success*

- 5.1—Select an online calendar platform for all community events by May 2019.
- 5.2—Contact a minimum of two local businesses every other month beginning in January 2019.
- 5.3—Every public school student has a library card by September 2019 (approximately 1,263 students).
- 5.4—Increase Friends membership by 50% by December 2019.
- 5.4—Increase funds raised through the Friends by 75% annually.

# GOAL SIX

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**Expand** library programming to excite current patrons and to attract new library users.

## *Objective 6.1*

Offer intergenerational programming for community building between seniors and youth.

## *Objective 6.2*

Celebrate literacy by hosting community reads, author talks and book clubs.

## *Objective 6.3*

Introduce ESL, health and financial literacy education for Spanish speakers.

## *Objective 6.4*

Identify additional space and funding for hosting more programs.

## *Measuring Success*

6.1—Host a minimum of two intergenerational programs each year.

6.2—Participate in the Big Read at least once.

6.2—Host several author talks per quarter and introduce at least two new book clubs.

6.3—Administer an ESL tutoring program.

6.3—Offer at least six health or financial literacy talks in Spanish each year.

6.4—Identify at least two programming spaces for library use free of charge by December 2019.

# WHAT'S NEXT?

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With a Strategic Plan for 2019-2021 in place, the library is poised to evolve in an appropriate way for the Bogota community. Library trustees and staff will begin prioritizing the defined goals to ensure completion by December 2021.

Some short-term objectives are already underway, and plans will be developed in early 2019 for execution of long-term projects. The planning process will include assignment of tasks and development of realistic timelines for each objective.

Throughout the life of this Strategic Plan, goals and objectives will be regularly evaluated to ensure that they continue to remain relevant. Library trustees and staff will remain vigilant in ensuring that any necessary adjustments are made promptly to address unforeseen changes in circumstances.

It is also important that this Strategic Plan be shared widely upon publishing and periodically during its duration. Garnering the support of all community members is valuable in driving our vision for the library's future forward.

*Board of Trustees  
Bogota Public Library*

# APPENDIX A: FOCUS GROUP DATA

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This is additional data from the Focus Groups which were discussed on Page 5.

## *Most Beneficial Aspects of the Library*

ESL

Storytime

Life skills programs for adults

Computer resources

Free services (books, resources, programs)

## *Benefits of a Small Community*

Family-oriented (i.e., everyone knows one another)

A walkable community

Conveniently located to NYC

Easy to be involved/nurture youth

Quaint

## *Importance of a Town Library*

Access to resources/knowledge (books, digital information, computers, reference material, etc.)

Encourages early education

Promotes reading, research skills

Brings people together/creates sense of community

Place for youth to connect with one another; form sense of identity

Services easily accessible (e.g., passports, cultural and educational programs)

## *Emerging Trends for the Library*

Life skills programming

Technology offerings (i.e., development, assistance)

Increase participation/usage rates [among non-readers, millennials, adults with older youth, working class families]

## *Challenges Confronted by Library Staff*

Lack of awareness [of services offered]

Space constraints and noise

Teen engagement (managing behavior)

Managing technology policy (usage, time limits, purpose)

# APPENDIX A (CONTINUED)

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## *Ways the Library Can Support the Community*

- Create more cross-community programs, i.e., those engaging community across age, race and ethnic groups
- Offer senior-friendly exercise programs
- Create senior-specific and integrated programs during daytime hours, when seniors are most likely to attend
- Offer monthly newsletter/library calendar for seniors (accessible on 2nd floor at their meetings)
- Promote local talent (artists, businesses, authors, etc.)

## *Ways the Library Can Facilitate and Support Students*

- Routine communication with teachers to understand how to supplement educational needs of youth
- Form lines of communication with parents to solicit and promote participation
- Form after school peer mediation program
- Fill gaps left by educational system through educational programming
- Develop youth-driven programs to facilitate technology education among seniors
- Offer mental health education for youth
- Host career forum and/or develop/provide list of career professions of community members to facilitate career exploration among youth

## *Most Useful Services for Seniors*

- Tax preparation
- Technology assistance (youth driven)
- Social programs with or by youth

## *Issues and Neighborhood Changes Impacting Seniors*

- Property taxes
- Noise
- Changing racial/ethnic demographic
- Lack of community (i.e., neighbors don't know one another anymore)
- Lack of support for snow removal