

**SCLSNJ Strategic Plan Update  
January - March 2021**

<p><b>STRATEGIC PRIORITIES</b> Here are the initiatives worked on over the last several months that specifically support our strategic priorities:</p>	<p><b>CORE SERVICES</b> Core service activities are a part of normal SCLSNJ business. Here are a few recent highlights and examples:</p>
<p><b>Promoting the Library as an impartial platform for creating MEANINGFUL INTERACTIONS AND CONNECTIONS</b></p> <p>Library staff and patrons will be making Valentines to send to a Veterans Administration (VA) Hospital in Lyons, NJ. The Community Living Center in Lyons is one of the largest in the entire VA system. The Somerset County facility is the only facility run by the VA System in all of New Jersey. Visitation at the Community Living Center is limited right now due to the current public health situation, so the library team thought it was particularly important this year to recognize the sacrifice that veterans have made in service to the country.</p>	<p><b>Making PERSONALIZED CONNECTIONS between patrons and materials</b></p> <p>The Somerset County Library System of New Jersey became poised to provide increased services to satisfy the growing needs of individuals who are unable to physically travel to the library within a housebound situation and to residents of community living centers. Living centers are assisted living, group homes, and senior housing complexes. This rapidly growing group of Somerset County residents are library customers and taxpayers who have cherished and supported services throughout their lifetimes. The Home Borrowing initiative began to take shape.</p>
<p><b>Exploring new ways to SHAPE OUR SPACES to meet community needs</b></p> <p>Somerset County reconvened the Threat Management Team which is responsible for evacuation planning, active shooter training, facility assessments, emergency response, evacuation officer designations, and training. County Administrator Mahr asked SCLSNJ to join this working group and branch space was offered to bring this important county group together to benefit all residents.</p>	<p><b>Presenting programs that help community members CONNECT, EXPLORE, SHARE AND DISCOVER</b></p> <p>During COVID-19, databases have extended their resources to patrons virtually. SCLSNJ announced that Candid (formerly Foundation Center and Guidestar) offered their Foundation Directory Online Essentials (basic) database with at-home access to all patrons. Just like other databases in the system, patrons must use their library card number and PIN to gain access to this. With this database, nonprofit board members and volunteers can do some initial research on potential foundations who might support their organization.</p>

<p><b>WELCOMING new residents</b></p> <p>Staff members proposed ideas for staff name tags to indicate staff fluent in languages other than English, including American Sign Language. SCLSNJ employees speak languages from around the world, either as native speakers or through advanced studies. Most of our staff are eager to use their language skills to communicate with patrons in a way that will make them feel welcome and more confident in asking for assistance.</p>	<p><b>Serving as a community GATHERING SPACE</b></p> <p>SCLSNJ found new ways for the public to gather in spaces during the current public health situation. Virtual walkthrough videos were created with the goal of touring each of the 10 branches, as well as to serve as an ongoing resource for library communities. The hope was that community members who have concerns about visiting the library will be able to watch these videos to get an idea of what to expect during their visit.</p> <p>The walkthroughs highlight the following: new procedures to ensure our customers have a safe visit locations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● identifying of reference services</li> <li>● material return procedures</li> <li>● location of self-service hold shelves</li> <li>● entrances, elevators, stairs, and parking spaces</li> <li>● here to find our public computers and various collections</li> </ul> <p>These virtual walkthrough videos are a continued way to connect to the community virtually.</p>
<p><b>Addressing the needs of SHIFTING DEMOGRAPHICS</b></p> <p>A disABILITIES Committee was created to demonstrate inclusion is achievable, provide agency and opportunity, promote independence and self-determination, and foster a sense of safety, connection and belonging in a library space through programming.</p>	<p><b>Promoting and supporting LIFELONG LEARNING</b></p> <p>SOARING into Kindergarten is a programming series that combines SOARING and school readiness. Its goal is to model and teach school readiness early literacy practices to caregivers to support building these skills at home. The SOARING into Kindergarten task force created the program and related materials The first foal with this effort is to then train Early Literacy staff.</p>
	<p><b>Providing TECHNOLOGY ACCESS AND EXPERTISE that meet the needs of the community</b></p> <p>In the interest of making the SCLSNJ website more accessible, staff began looking into having it</p>

translated into languages other than English. It was discovered it was much easier, and more flexible, to show customers how to use the Translate function in their browser to translate any website. In doing that, staff don't have to guess at which languages are most in demand, and as the website content changes, local library teams don't have to worry about keeping translations updated to match.

**Creating opportunities that build Somerset County's ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

SCLSNJ recognized the importance of supporting county agencies especially during the public health situation. For the past 21 years, staff recognized the needs of our community by making the holidays brighter for the less fortunate. Donations of 300 lbs of pet food, various supplies of dog collars, pet toys, detergents and kitten formula along with \$350 was delivered to the Somerset Regional Animal Shelter. \$1200.00 in gift cards was collected by library staff to the Food Bank Network of Somerset County. Both agencies were thrilled by the generosity and good will.