



Community Town Hall Meeting Reporting Form

Library and date of meeting: **CENTRAL, July 15, 2014**

Number of people in attendance: **20**

Exercise #1: *What is the single most important contribution the library makes to our community today?*

Top responses:

- Center of social services & networked information, clean & safe place, social element – organize day & life, do homework. Place to get life-saving info not available free elsewhere. Access to books & DVDs & tools. Workshops for different groups, place & spirit of community. Community hum, opportunities to meet people.
- Provides resources & programming for different populations especially low income & disabled (ex: BIN, community resources database; computers & computer classes; literacy programs)
- Easily accessible, professionally curated collections: reference, local history, music, movies. Computer classes & access.

All responses:

- The library is ready to help everyone. This means a great deal to me – one very human and compassionate resource – all libraries are this way!
- Professionally curated collections and information
- Education & enlightenment through books, periodicals, media, art, literary programs, discussions, etc.
- Easy access to research & source materials
- There is no single contribution – that’s like “Which of your children do you love best?” However, important contributions are: answering questions, creating information, gathering people, expanding horizons, and books, books, books.
- The provision of resources (print, electronic, web access, tools)
- Free information access to our community onsite and online.
- Provides for needs of many different people – especially low income and disabled. BIN is great.
- Current reading (books/magazines)
- In many ways the library is the community – it’s (something) with all ages, economic groups. It welcomes those learning to read and then helps all to relax, enjoy, and maybe experience (learn) more.
- Important to whom? To homeless people, it’s a place to sit in a clean, safe space.
- To retired people, it’s a place to organize your day and participate in public life. To students, it’s a place to get school papers written and meet friends.
- Making all kinds of life saving info. Available to all who need it.
- It is the center of social services and networking information services.
- A multiplicity of contributions: access to thousands of books; access to hundreds of DVDs, videos, tools; offerings of workshops for different groups, place & spirit of community.
- An information source that is an ever expanding one including books, Link+ and electronic books
- Communication
- Focal point for sharing information for the community – a community hub.
- Books, of course. However, the blatant display of so-called “tax” forms serves to delude the People. See U.S. Code, Title 26, (Internal Revenue Code), Section 6001.
- Information source (ever-expanding), communication, focal point for sharing information, community hub, books/information, free place to come together, disability access, (informal) meeting space.
- Access to free information (current & historical), on site or on line. Provision of resources – print, web access, electronic & tools. Answering questions. Gathering people. Books, books, books! Physical collection. Multiculturalism, diversity.
- Easily accessible and professionally curated collections.

Exercise #2: *What one thing could the library do to better serve the community?*

Top responses:

- Increase number of computers in branches. HOBBY collection enriched (needlepoint & cross-stitch). Establish silence (noisy chairs). Longer hours (open daily @10am, Sunday 10am-8pm). Divest. Increasing resources, access to resources. Signage in “normal” language.
- Better promote and maintain special things that the library does (Link+, International collection, BIN, History Room, Skilled Ref, school visits, tools). Reaffirm the availability and importance of public flyers/notices/newspapers/journals. Well balanced collection, print & digital, recruit multilingual library staff. Use of library space (more for popular material). Gather statistics of in house use of materials. Better signage for the International collection. Link +.
- Better communication to a wider swath of the community. Create more content and information. Do better: social media, event communication, calendar updated, make sure staff is aware of events, create more info (LH, BIN, food).
- As more and more we utilize the internet, we need to find a way to make sure the serendipity of browsing and discovering new things is maintained and strengthened. Don’t arbitrarily cut down successful programs and disappoint those who are participating (Play Readers).
- Better access to NY Times from 1st floor of Central. Clear policy about quiet conversation, no cell phones. Expend your multiplicity of offerings (services to accepting our multiple, specific answers)

All responses:

- Better pay for librarians?
- Divest itself of (unconscious) federalized terms...such as “resident”* here in the “US”**, etc. (I am aware this is not sufficiently clear) *Inhabitant is not legally jeopardizing. ***USofA” is where we are!
- Hobby collection like needle point & cross-stitch
- Free meeting space for nonprofit groups. Longer hours.
- Establish silence
- As more and more we utilize the internet find a way to make sure the serendipity of browsing and discovering new things is maintained/strengthened.
- Separate silent people from noisy people, eliminate cell phones.
- Don’t arbitrarily cut down successful programs and disappoint the people who were participating – play reading!
- Continue to build a well-balanced collection (printed & digital) to meet the informational & recreational needs of the diverse community. Promote international collections (quality selection). Recruit multilingual library staff to curate the collection.
- Keep people courteous of the needs of others. Have a policy about QUIET conversations and NO cell phones that is routinely enforced, even with young children.
- How do I know? Ask questions that don’t require a hierarchy of answers – extend your multiplicity of offerings and services to accepting our multiple specific answers.
- Make the Sunday New York Times available to people with walking disability available by moving it to the first floor with the other books, mac, cds.
- Communicate its variety of collections and programs to a wider swath of the community. “Create” more information (like seriously local history, etc.)
- “Get the word out” about programs, events, services available and upcoming.
- Social media & event communication. Update twitter/fb accounts w/new events @all branches daily. Keep calendar on library website updated & accurate (if it’s not on the calendar neither the public nor the circulation desk know about it. GRR.
- Better promote the special things it does better (Berkeley History Room, skilled reference librarians, BIN, children’s librarians & school visits, getting books off the shelf for holds). Lighten up and allow paper info (notices etc.) into branches - digital isn’t enough.