



**Rahway Public Library  
Annual Report  
July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010**

**Overview**

**Rahway Public Library, like libraries everywhere, had a difficult year. We continued to provide vital services under reduced circumstances to a public in dire need of information and technology assistance. Library visits increased by 10% this year although circulation of books and materials is down about 7%. Library card registration is up 11%. Computer use increased 30% with job search and social networking as major activities. Reference and information inquiries increased 14%. The city's allocation to the library remained the same for FY10 as the previous year. At the same time, contractual salary increases took effect, salary deferrals ceased, and other costs increased colliding into an urgent need to cut expenses. Hours of service were reduced and the flow of new books and materials slowed dramatically.**

**Board of Trustees, Staff and Friends**

**Our ability to provide services under pressure is largely due to a talented staff and a dedicated Board of Trustees and Friends. We said goodbye to longtime staff; Beverley Grant and Elizabeth Iovino, and we bid farewell to trustees, Giselle Petrarola, Elizabeth Jotz and Paula Braxton. We welcomed new trustees Eric Miles and Derron Palmer. Our Friends of the Rahway Public Library completed their first year of membership recruitment and held a successful book sale.**

### **Building and Maintenance**

Facility challenges this year included concern about the swine flu pandemic, acquiring second floor neighbors in the building, maintaining current technology and keeping the HVAC operational.

Employees were taught Swine Flu prevention and offered voluntary vaccination which seems to have been effective.

Anlar Construction built and moved into a new office space on the second floor early in the year. After a period of adjustment and fine tuning some of the building systems, we have settled into a neighborly relationship. Several major repairs were required to the HVAC system and five year scheduled replacement of battery backup was completed on the fire and building alarm panels. Repair was finally completed on the replacement of the lobby ceramic tile floor.

### **Technology and Web Site**

The improved library web site provides more opportunities for our patrons to interact with our staff and services. Featured services include reader's advisory with 'Book News'—short annotations of new titles and the ability to locate them in our catalog. 'Online Book Clubs' gives patrons a taste of e-reading-delivering chapters to your email. 'Optimal Resume' provides template resumes and cover letters. 'Learning Express' provides sample tests and study guides for standardized educational and vocational tests.

Site visitors also benefit from 'Web Resources' a continuously updated topical list of links compiled by staff. 'Video Tutorials' teach site visitors how to make best use of the web site and catalog. New 'on the spot' information services include text reference, twitter and email news. The Rahway Public Library has also expanded its web presence by reaching out to our patrons on social networking sites like Facebook.

During the past fiscal year, our aging technological infrastructure demanded a great deal of maintenance in the way of repairs, replacements, and upgrades to both hardware and software.

In order to stay current and provide the functionality patrons expect, we had to replace four public work stations, service nearly all staff PC's, replace our bibliographic server, upgrade our ILS, and update the operating system on our internet server.

In order to meet the needs of our patrons, this past fiscal year saw an enhanced commitment to technological training. Through video tutorials and one-on-one training sessions, staff members have been given the opportunity to learn new software such as Microsoft Windows 7, current versions of the Office Suite, and desktop publishing. Especially tech savvy staff are being instructed on how to use the more advanced

features of our ILS, how to update our website, and how to perform basic maintenance to our PC's and server.

### **Collection**

The size of the collection increased very slightly; 3%. We are purchasing less and focusing on high popularity items such as audiovisual and bestseller fiction. We found it necessary to cut back newspaper and magazine subscriptions as a cost saver, many are going out of business anyway. The restoration of the interlibrary loan program through the State Library is a blessing as we can request titles in lieu of purchasing although many libraries are doing the same. We are looking at e-titles as an alternative for some hardcover genres. The library collection is very much about limited resources and changing formats at this time.

### **Programs and Services**

We maintained popular staff led programs this year and expanded into new partnerships to provide needed programs and services. Rahway Public Schools continues to be a significant partner—successfully linking schoolchildren to the library for early and ongoing literacy. Family Reading Nights and Family Writing Nights have ballooning audiences. The elementary schools display their reading incentive program progress on a library bulletin board. The library tracks accelerated reading titles required for school. Joint events are part of the summer reading programs. This year the library also partnered with the Rahway Senior Center, the Rahway Health Department, the Rahway Housing Authority and Pathway to Hope—a community organization, and the United States Census Bureau, to provide services.

The Rahway Public Library received contributions from individuals and organizations throughout the year. All of these donations are significant in their common message—helping the library helps others.

We express deep thanks to the Kiwanis Club of Rahway, the Margaret S. Jenkins Trust, Mrs. Joan Scheid, the Union County Kennel Club. Many thanks to those who have donated their books to us as well. Lastly, we thank our steadfast volunteers Catherine Keefe, Teresa Mannino, Will Marsh and all of the teens that volunteer time during their summer vacation.

Come In. Find out.

Gail Miller  
Library Director

## **MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Some of the responsibilities of a library board are to promote the growth of services, to establish policies and procedures, to address the needs of the community and to ensure a welcoming environment. The Rahway Library Board of Trustees continues to uphold these responsibilities that are reviewed annually at our planning meeting. This year the meeting was held on June 15, 2010. We updated the task of the Community Relations Committee, Finance Committee, Personnel Committee and Nominating and Board Development Committee. We identified the major policies and procedures that will be revised, in addition to policies drafted by the staff that will need board approval. Each board member identified goals that they planned to undertake for the coming year. Those goals were to collaborate with schools and community organizations, to increase library use, to improve financial operations and investments, to market services to the community, to increase membership for the Friends Group and to encourage board and staff relationships.

One of the significant achievements this year has been the re-establishment of the Rahway Library Friends Group. Linnea Rhodes, President of the Westfield Memorial Library Friends Group was instrumental in providing start-up information. She met with the organizing committee and talked about raising funds, building membership and working with the board and the community. Patti O'Mahoney, staff liaison, and a committed core group of volunteers worked together with Gail Miller to establish non-profit status for the Friends Group. Board trustees have shown their support for the Friends Group by recruiting members and volunteering at the first annual book sale.

As with every board there have been changes. The Board of Education designee, Paula Braxton, retired as principal of Rahway High School. This vacancy remains open but will be filled by the Superintendent of Schools or his designee. Elizabeth Jotz resigned as a board trustee and that vacancy was filled by Eric Miles, employed by the Elizabeth Board of Education as a high school teacher. Giselly Petraroia term expired and the vacancy was filled by Derron Palmer, an active member of the Friends Group and employed by Hudson County in the Department of Health and Human Services as a program monitor. We thank our former members for their service, welcome our new members and acknowledge our current members for their dedication.

In addition to the required responsibilities, several board members sponsored and facilitated programs and activities. Through the efforts of Kenneth Pushko, the library has on permanent display in the café an original painting by Marcel Truppa, a well-known artist and Rahway resident. There was a reception for the unveiling that was well-attended by the community. Margaret Cilia worked with the schools and the library for another successful summer reading program. Margaret Cilia and I attended the annual state Trustee Institute in Princeton. Other programs for children and workshops for the community were promoted and facilitated by trustees. We look forward to other projects lead by board members.

Gail Miller, library director, continues to be an efficient and well-organized administrator. She has maintained a good relationship with the board. She encourages input on proposed changes and keeps the board informed about library operations. She has been able to find creative solutions to staff changes without compromising the

delivery of services. We commend Ms. Miller, her administrators and staff for their dedication and commitment to the Rahway Library.

As we look forward, we plan to further our partnership with the schools and other community organizations, provide services based on the needs of the community and support the development of the Friends Group. In addition, we are looking for alternative sources for funding to address recent budget cuts and to avoid the further reduction or elimination services. As expressed in our mission statement, the library will continue to serve as a center for lifelong learning in the City of Rahway.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2010**

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