

East Brunswick Public Library **2011 Annual Report**

Each day, the Library welcomes over 1000 walk-in customers who use the library building as an oasis to connect with friends, look at art, read a newspaper or magazine, conduct business or connect online with wifi. In-house customers and many hundreds more remote customers seek information, request customized health and wellness research, require help with online job applications and resume writing, attend educational programs for children, teens and adults, request school and leisure reading suggestions, learn about eBook connectivity and business programs and borrow entertainment media. In an age of Internet searching and digital downloads, Librarians are still viewed as the ultimate search engine! As the center of learning for all ages, the East Brunswick Public Library fulfills its role as a house of knowledge by delivering information in the format each individual customer requires. From babies to ninety-nine year olds, the library has something for everyone. Our role as the information center of the community has not changed even as the method of delivering that information is in constant flux.

The Library Board of Trustees and senior staff spent many months in 2011 formulating a strategic plan that will guide library services for the next 3-5 years. The Library Board was deliberate in inviting input from our residents, library staff, Township employees and school officials in order to develop a plan that responded to the articulated needs of the community. The strategic direction encompasses four pillars of service to our residents: Support learning and development for children and teens, fulfill the information needs for all ages, provide services for recreational readers, and welcome all residents to our multi-generational, multi-cultural gathering place. The plan delineates the challenges to maintaining the library's history of excellence, core strategic imperatives that infuse the plan, the changing library environment both locally and nationally and the issues of access and technological innovation. Please be sure to read the whole strategic planning document, available on the library website, since it contains much more detail about library issues and future services.

As the most democratic of institutions, public libraries have always responded to the demands of the times, whether economic, political, demographic or environmental. East Brunswick Public Library has responded to the tough economic times by streamlining every process, trimming every line of the budget, fostering partnership with Township departments, businesses and local funders and creating the infrastructure for new revenue streams that will sustain library services well into the future. The Library is a leader in supporting small business owners and entrepreneurs through our Business Resource Center, a model that is being studied by state legislators. The Library is partnering with Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital to foster health literacy in Middlesex County and eventually around the state. The Library will continue to push forward to create new programs and services as the need arises, supported by both private and public dollars.

61.7% of East Brunswick residents used their library card in 2011, borrowing 790,161 items. Remote access to our catalog, databases and e-book collections allow our residents to utilize their library 24/7: in 2011, there were a whopping 1,360,698 uses of the electronic resources provided by the library. Meeting rooms were used for over 1,200 meetings, including those local businesses who rented meeting room space through a pilot program within the Business Resource Center. Our residents vote with their feet – they love their library and we intend to do everything possible to continue to earn their love and respect. If you haven't visited lately, come see what your library can do for you!