

**Focus Group sessions**

Three focus groups were set up to get some direct feedback from both staff and the community.

Questions asked in the focus group were:

1. What made you consider the library as a place of employment? (Staff)
2. Think about the library of your childhood and share a memorable experience with us?  
(Community)
3. If Ledyard had no library how would it affect the community?
4. How is the community changing?
5. What kind of library would you like to see in our community
6. Thinking about the future, what threats and opportunities do you see for the library?
7. Additional thoughts or ideas?

**Staff focus group**

The staff approached the questions from an inside view, having knowledge of what the library now provides. When asked about considering the library as a place of employment the answers ranged from a family member working in a library, to love of reading, and the learning opportunity a library provides. The staff is very much attuned to patron needs and feels strongly about what the community would lose if there were no library. Connecting with people, knowing that someone who lives alone is ok, assisting people as they search for jobs or navigate technology, meeting space for tutors and students or family visitations, local history and free resources would be lost without a library. They see technology as having an impact on the community, along with growth in other departments (police, schools, fire) and an expectation for information to be pushed to them. Staff would like to see the level of service increase with more hours, staffing, programs and space. They see the value of the library being questioned, competition with other departments, lack of understanding about what the library does and lack of funding as threats. Opportunities include getting community input on relevant topics, partnerships with other organizations and the availability of social media to promote the library. Other thoughts include getting the pulse of the community, a town wide mailing promoting our services and developing a teen program.

**Community focus groups**

A community focus group of 15-18 people was held at each branch. While we tried to have a diverse group it was difficult to get teens and young parents to attend. Most of the participants relayed fond memories of the library. They recognize the value of the library and what the community would lose without one. Although people can visit libraries in other towns (which is unique to CT and not the case in other states) it reflects negatively on the town. The library provides a place for young moms to connect with people, for children and adults to find books, movies, music and reliable information. It provides a shelter in a storm when power is out and

there is a space for groups to meet. Technology was seen as having an impact on the community with more digital resources creating a digital divide. Older adults still prefer books but rely on the library for helping them learn to use resources in this format. They see the population aging and becoming more diverse with the casino. Many participants wanted a bigger facility and better funding for the library with more programs offered. Funding cutbacks on the state and local level were seen as threats along with a lack of understanding about what the library provides. Redefining the library through programs is seen as an opportunity along with providing resources for home schooling. Additional thoughts revealed a true appreciation for what the library does, emphasizing free resources that are available to all. Bringing back the proposed addition was also mentioned.

Over all there seemed to be a lack of knowledge about what the library does showing a need for better marketing about the library. Information needs to be pushed out continually in different ways. We need to engage the community in ways that will promote what the library does. Programming is important and should be highlighted. It may also be time to promote an addition in the next 4-5 years.