

History of LCLC 2000-2004

Report To The Community Foundation of Tompkins County

Official visit July 12, 2004

During the 1999 campaign for Lansing Town council, two of the candidates put fourth their belief that Lansing was in need of library services, a belief backed by many local residents. In January of 2000 the Town Board appointed a Library Steering Committee. The first task undertaken by the Committee was to conduct a town wide survey to determine the interest in library service in Lansing. Ninety percent of the surveys returned were in favor, and the old Town Hall came up as the most popular site for the proposed library.

The Steering Committee then proceeded to visit the Tompkins County Public Library (TCPL) Reading Centers in Caroline and Danby, as well as libraries in Groton, Dryden and Aurora. According to the information received at this date, New York State was not granting licenses to new, independent Libraries. It was decided then that Lansing should pursue becoming a reading room of the TCPL, located at the old Town Hall. We began to work closely with TCPL to achieve this goal.

Following the recommendation of the Old Town Hall Committee, the Town Board agreed to lease the old Town Hall to the Library Steering Committee for \$1.00 a year for the purposes of establishing a Reading Room. In June 2000 the Friends of the Lansing Community Library Center (LCLC) was formed, with a Board of Directors and standing committees. The Friends of LCLC was incorporated, acquired not for profit status and applied for IRS tax-exempt status. The dream was becoming a reality. Then the boiler blew up.

Thus began the renovations of the old Town Hall into the Lansing Library Center. The boiler was replaced and steel beams were installed to support the first floor's additional book load. The basement ceiling was replaced to meet fire codes and an American's with Disabilities Act-approved (ADA) emergency alarm was installed. In addition, an ADA bathroom was constructed and the old, existing handicapped ramp was refurbished. The floors were sanded and carpeted, walls were scrubbed, curtains were hung, and windows were washed. Most of this work was done by Lansing volunteers and local area contractors, architects and engineers who gave of their time and expertise.

The Friends of LCLC Board of Directors developed a five-year start-up budget of \$226,000, with \$65,000 needed for the first year. Within three months \$40,000 was raised through the generous support of individuals, local small businesses, corporations, lending institutions, the Town and Village of Lansing and the Friends of TCPL. Money was also raised by book sales, sales of Tee shirts and book bags, and a silent auction at the Fireman's Carnival. Furniture, book shelves and books were donated, and TCPL sent us the first installment of books and Audio-Visual materials due to us as a Reading Center. On July 21, 2001 the doors to LCLC opened. "Build it and they will come" never had a truer meaning.

Over the past three years our collection has grown by leaps and bounds, along with the number of patrons; 21,187 items were circulated in 2003 compared to 10,933 items in 2002 and our statistics show us that an average of 92.6% of the materials circulated are from the donated Lansing collection rather than from the materials loaned by TCPL and Finger Lakes Library System. Over 1500 patrons (1/4 of the Lansing population) use the library.

LCLC provides a weekly Friday story hour for 2, 3 and 4 year olds, along with a community summer reading program. We have two computers with Internet access available to Lansing patrons with a total of 345 users in 2003. (A new computer room is in our expansion plans.) We provide interlibrary loan service, as well as our popular drop-off and pick-up of books from TCPL. We are now able to offer access to our library 6 days a week. And what may well be the most impressive statistic of all is that all of this has been accomplished solely by volunteers. In 2003 we logged approximately 6,130 volunteer hours done by 43 people.

And here we are, three years from our opening date, getting ready to launch a capital campaign and to renovate our building, which no longer can contain our collection. We have plans to expand the building, renovate the basement, add a handicap elevator, and integrate our building into the plans for a Lansing Town Center. We are now proud and excited to be an affiliate of the Community Foundation of Tompkins County.

I would not be telling the whole story of LCLC if I left out the amazing work of our Fund Raising committee. This group of extraordinary people received Grants in our first three years from CAP, AES Cayuga, the Tompkins County Foundation, NYSEG, The Community Foundation of Tompkins County, the Gannett Foundation, Cargill, Target, Smith Barney/Citigroup, Triad, Ithaca Rotary and The John Ben Snow Foundation. And last year they raised \$31,600 through our now famous Twilight Magic Night, book sales, town mailings and of Krispy Kreme donut sales. To me there is no harder job than to raise funds, and these people do it with class and finesse.

I'd like to close with the reading of the Mission Statement of LCLC. A mission I feel we always keep in front of us as we serve this community.

To maintain and improve the quality of life for the citizens of the Lansing Community by providing access to information, cultural resources and opportunities for personal enrichment.

To provide informational, educational and recreational reading for users of all ages.

To provide expertise and current technology for equal access to quality library services, materials, personnel and facilities.

Thank you for coming this evening.

(Marlaine Darfler, President of the Board of Directors)