

Library Center Looks to Add Four Rooms

BY TONY HALL

The new chairperson for the Lansing Community Library Center (LCLC) has announced renovation plans for reading center that will add four rooms to the bottom floor; making way for new computers, a meeting space for community organizations, a material processing area and, last but not least, room for more books.

The reading center has grown in four years from a dream to a sparsely stocked library with houseplants placed between books to make the shelves look full to a cornerstone of community life with 12,000 items, open six days a week, said Marlaine Darfler, who became the chair of the Friends of the Lansing Community Library Center in January.

"We went from not existing to overflowing in four years," Darfler said.

The reading center, which took over the shell of the former Lansing Town Hall, now features regular story-telling hours, donates books and video materials to the Gossett Center and pushes their grant writing to include interactions with the Lansing Central School District. Programs include invitations to every elementary classroom to bestow a library card on every child in school here and special orders of science and history books for the middle and high school students.

"We see the building as a community center. What is making us different is a library with a community, versus a community without a library," Darfler said.

The LCLC is a place of "books and ideas and imagination," she said.

With rolled up sleeves and home-spun volunteering, the LCLC put itself on the map here. But the two-story building is not making the best use of its space and is not handicapped accessible. LCLC committee members want to keep the momentum going with a renovation project that will fully utilize

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their space and open their doors for everyone.

Working with Lansing architect Bert Fortner, plans call for switching the entranceway to the rear of the building and adding a lift. Darfler said the committee's main concern was that handicapped persons not be shuffled to a rear entrance.

"We don't want to have a lift in the back. That would be insulting," she said.

The plan also adds a material processing room, two meeting rooms — one large, one small — and a computer room to the bottom floor. Hook ups will make high speed access to the Internet available for students whose homes do not have cable, Darfler said.

The changes will also "open up the first floor," Darfler said.

With the changes, the LCLC will have room for an improved foyer, more shelf space and a dedicated children's room on the first floor.

Darfler estimated the inside will expand the library's capacity by 40 percent.

The renovations will cost approximately \$250,000, she said. A fund-raising campaign, which has already begun, will step up into full gear at the beginning of next year.

Currently, committee members are working on writing grants and discussing the proposal with local businesses, Darfler said.

"We think it's worth the investment," she said. "What it does on a whole to the community. It attracts homeowners and walk-in business to the community center area," she said.

Citing Lansing's mix of rural farm kids, the offspring of academics and senior citizens just around the corner at Woodsedge, Darfler said the LCLC has, "gone beyond this is a place where there's books.

"It's where people interact," she said.