
Expanding the Library

Nozzolio, Lifton on hand for groundbreaking

BY ELIZABETH RINALDO

The expansion of the Lansing Community Library Center has officially begun.

Sen. Michael Nozzolio and Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton helped celebrate a ground-breaking at the library Tuesday evening, at a ceremony that celebrated both the library and the community that supports it.

Nozzolio and Lifton worked to secure a \$100,000 state grant to help fund the expansion. Already \$300,000 has been raised, and the library is currently in the midst of campaigning for the last \$50,000.

At the ceremony, Marlane Darfler, chair of the capital campaign committee, highlighted the benefits of having a library in the community's backyard. She noted that a strong library will attract homeowners and will support the school system, which in turn will attract businesses to the area.

"A strong library creates teachers and dreamers," she said. "It's with the investment."

When the Lansing Community Library Center first opened its doors in 2001, it was envisioned as a reading room; a place for people to come and find books.

But already it has grown into so

much more, and the current facility is bursting at the seams. The expansion will include the creation of a children's reading room, along with a circulation area, offices, a community room and a board room.

What's unique about LCLC is that it is manned completely by volunteers: about 45 volunteers put in 450 hours of service each month.

The backgrounds and experiences of volunteers vary widely; some are working professionals, and some are local retirees.

All are dedicated and have a love of Lansing and of learning. No one is paid a salary.

The library started with some donated books; today it boasts 10,000 items.

Since its inception, the library has become a centerpiece for community conversations, Darfler said.

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Digging for the Library



photo/Elizabeth Rimoldo

From left: Holly Hardie, Library Chairwoman Marlaine Darfler, Town Supervisor Steve Farkas, Sen. Michael Nozzolio, Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton, Joanne Lorino, Library Treasurer Cliff Buck and Donna Scott at the ground-breaking.

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"It's something wonderful to see a senior citizen sitting and reading a book with a toddler," she said, "or to see a teenager helping someone else use the computer. The library has become a place for people to come and converse, and it's exciting to watch that happening. Those conversations end up building relationships that might not otherwise happen."

Sandy Dhimitri, a member of the capital campaign committee, said that it wasn't long ago that having one visitor in the library was exciting; now, she said, there are more than 2,000 patrons

of all ages visiting the library.

"There are folks who don't travel, who can't get to the library downtown," she said. "Having this library here is truly great for them."

Dhimitri said one of the defining moments in demonstrating the importance of the library came in a conversation with an elementary student, who had come to the library on a school trip.

"He didn't know that there were libraries outside of schools," she said. "He didn't know you could borrow books for free."

In addition to pursuing the expansion project, the library also recently began offering high speed computer access, a tool that's vital to many members of the community, Dhimitri said.

"A lot of us take for granted that we

have a computer at home, but that's not true of every student in our school district," she said. "This will help level the playing field for all students."

The library is also pursuing a New York State charter, which would separate the library from the Tompkins County Library, and would also allow for the hiring of a librarian.

Cliff Buck, treasurer for LCLC, told the community that the library has been a healthy financial organization, never spending more than it raised.

Already, \$350,000 has been raised in the capital campaign he said, which is more than three fourths of the way to the goal of \$400,000.

"Now we need the help of the general public to take us over the top," he said.