In 2015, the library successfully met three-fourths of the goals outlined in the Fanwood Memorial Library Strategic Plan 2013–2018, as well as other significant operations objectives.

I. Strategic Plan Accomplishments

A. Library Redesign Submitted to Council
The board presented to Council a detailed feasibility study that addresses the lack of ADA compliance and the long-standing need for additional, flexible space.

B. Staffing Revamped
The addition of two new professional librarians and support staff raised the service level we offer. Individual staff responsibilities were reshuffled and operations streamlined. Regular monthly staff meetings were implemented, and training opportunities continue to be a priority.

Our director, Dan Weiss, maintained strong leadership in 2015. His oversight, creativity, and commitment ensured excellent day-to-day library operations, staffing, services, and programming. Additionally, Dan continued his award winning work, Libraries and Autism: We’re Connected, which has shed national light on our activities.

Susan Staub, children’s librarian, continued to develop programming, like the Monday Nights @7 summer series, and provide engaging materials that make the Fanwood library an attractive destination for children and their families.

Mandy Richards, our recently hired adult services librarian, amassed an impressive list of accomplishments in her first five months: launching the monthly e-newsletter, increasing social media presence, developing teen programming, participating in the national Day of Code, and overseeing our makerspace activities.

Dedicated part-time staff members developed the First Sunday series of programming, selected and processed materials, checked out over 40,000 items, and helped hundreds of patrons with technical issues and reference questions, as well as contributing daily to the success of library operations.

C. Technology Overhauled
Dependable IT services have been engaged, and with their assistance, Windows-based servers and workstations for the public and staff have been upgraded and installed. We quadrupled Internet bandwidth and implemented a robust managed Wi-Fi network, ensuring seamless and consistent free access to the Internet for the public and staff. We continue to provide public faxing and notary service. Additionally, we implemented for the first time iPads and Kindles for public use.

D. Materials Purchased
We provided books and DVDs and increased access to e-books and audiobooks, despite the fact that market prices outpace our tight budget. Through strong budget management we added 3,494 items to the collection in 2015.
II. Promotional Campaigns and Community Awareness

A. Communications Plan Implemented
Library staff, board members, and the Friends have joined forces to develop and implement a marketing strategy to promote the library’s mission. The staff now sends a monthly e-newsletter to over 1,450 cardholders and has implemented email notification service for checkout receipts and coming due and overdue materials.

B. Internet Presence Expanded and Improved
We launched a more user-friendly website (www.fanwoodlibrary.org), and with considerable guidance from the new full-time librarian started a Twitter feed, increased our Facebook activity, and posted regularly on Instagram.

C. Community Engagement Extended
We implemented the Fanwood Maker Lab where the public can drop in and engage in a variety of high-tech and more traditional creative activities using our tools in makerspace sessions, overseen by our professional staff. The MuseumPass, supported by both towns’ Friends groups, continues to be a big success with over 1,050 subsidized day passes sold and 371 membership passes circulated to participants in 2015. In addition, we staffed a booth at Fanny Wood Day and posted a list of community organizations on the website.

III. Shared Services
We maintained our shared-services relationship with the Scotch Plains Public Library.

IV. Outside Funding Initiatives
Encouraged by the success of our Close the Gap campaign and the continued success of the Friends book sale, we extended our exploration of alternative, supplemental funding. In 2015 we secured a $4,250 grant from the Union County Freeholders that provided a new AWE Early Literacy Learning Station and other equipment for the Children’s Department.

V. Statistics
- We maintained our high level of loaning materials with a total circulation of 44,271 items.
- eBook and audiobook circulation rose a dramatic 48% in 2015 with 2,376 checkouts by Fanwood cardholders.
- With just seven months of tracking, we served 775 distinct clients with our latest Wi-Fi capability.
- We maintained a steady level of on-site service with over 42,825 visitors though our doors.
- We had a very big year in programming, with 366 distinct events that attracted over 9,000 library users of all ages. This included Nursery Rhyme Storytimes, Chess League, Family Puzzle Day, Superhero Boot Camp, and Amazing Stories for Future Heroes, as well as the Created Equal series, Star Wars events, concerts, and an author presentation by Ann Hood.
- Our website was viewed 45,653 times by 13,823 visitors, a significant increase from 2014.

VI. Looking Ahead
We thank the mayor and Council for joining with us in achieving these goals and look forward to building on these efforts to bring about an ADA-compliant and increased-space solution to our facility. We will strive to meet the remaining goals outlined in the Strategic Plan, increase our outreach to community groups, further staff development, and identify fundraising opportunities. As always, we will be responsive to the library and information needs of all Fanwood residents through a broad selection of programs, materials, and services.