

Voices of Ramsey

A Summary of Comments
From
Ramsey Residents
About the
Ramsey Free Public Library

Draft

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Executive Summary

Seven focus group sessions were held in Ramsey, New Jersey in April and May 2003. Approximately 80 individuals attended the various sessions. Participants included frequent and infrequent library users, staff and nonusers. Participants also included seniors and retirees, teenagers, parents, educators, and civic leaders, as well as staff, Friends and volunteers from the Ramsey Free Public Library.

Participants were engaged in discussions about the Ramsey Free Public Library and the library's role in the community, today and in the future. They welcomed the opportunity to participate in a conversation about the improvements they would like in the library as well as to reflect on certain changes and improvements that have already been made and ideas for the future of the library. Overall, attendance and participation was very good, reflecting a growing interest by residents in the future of library services in Ramsey. Staff members were also pleased to participate in a discussion about the library and their ideas about the future library needs of Ramsey residents.

The following comments are meant to provide a summary assessment and analysis of the comments made by participants and not intended to cover all areas that are included in the attached full report.

Perceptions of the library and current library services

Among participants, users and nonusers alike, there is a strong sense of the importance of library services to the Ramsey community. Participants believe that the library provides public space in an environment of diminishing public spaces. They view the library as an important institution in the life of Ramsey residents. They view the library as a conduit of information and resources which can enhance the quality of life for residents of all ages and as the center or hub of social, community and cultural life for Ramsey.

Participants view the library as a social, recreational, cultural, and technological center of community activity. They want to “*get connected*” at the library, to each other and to new sources of information. They also want the library to “*get connected*” to all segments of the population and to all other community, business and civic organizations to help meet their needs. Participants have high expectations for the role of the library in Internet and PC use and instruction and as a center for popular materials and resources. Participants expect to be able to easily use the library for:

- I. After school projects, assignments and for tutoring for the community's students
- II. Children and teen programs, expanded activities and collections serving pre-k through 12th grade
- III. Reading current fiction and non fiction, with little or no wait
- ~~IV. Comfortably browsing, sitting, relaxing, reading or attending a~~

- fun or informative adult program
- V. Using Internet connected PCs, without a wait
 - VI. Using computers with the latest software
 - VII. Learning how to use the catalog, the Internet or PC software
 - VIII. Research and reference through available and current print and digital databases and resources
 - IX. Learning new skills or finding information about various subjects

Ideas for improvement

Participants were eager to discuss possible improvements to the library and ideas for the future of the Library. They specifically mentioned improvements that relate to collections (adult, teen and children's), hours, comfortable and pleasing facilities and furnishings, access to PCs and the Internet, and instruction in PC, catalog and Internet use and parking. Participants commented on the many positive improvements that the library has made over the past 2-3 years and the importance of continual improvement. They also discussed other area libraries that they use and why they may prefer them over their own library. Among the comments were:

- I. A drive through book drop curbside or somewhere close to the building
- II. Improve parking for the library
- III. Programs and materials for middle and high school students
- IV. Increased after school use of the library for a variety of services, activities and programs for students
- V. Closer collaboration with the schools for projects and assignments
- VI. Programs for 4th, 5th and 6th grade students
- VII. More adult programs
- VIII. More new current fiction and nonfiction, especially best sellers – clean out more older, worn books
- IX. Make space available for community meetings and community use – the meeting room is booked far in advance and is too small
- X. Expanded weekend and summer hours so that the library is available to the whole community and matches our life styles
- XI. A wireless network so I can connect my notebook in the library
- XII. A quiet reading room or area – seniors need a quiet place to sit, read and congregate – with more than one copy of the daily newspaper

Options and choices

Residents mentioned many choices they have for library services. Barnes and Noble, Borders, and other area libraries offer choices that may not be available in Ramsey. They commented on the libraries in Mahwah, Suffern, Upper Saddle River and Ridgewood as alternate sources for library materials and programming. Area libraries may offer deeper collections, increased hours and more

programming for some segments of the Ramsey community. Similarly, there are residents from area towns who may use the Ramsey Library, due to Sunday hours.

The tradition of resource sharing among Bergen County Library System (BCCLS) libraries is a long one. Though materials can be shared and non residents attend programs in other libraries, the sense of community “*connectedness*” is missed when Ramsey residents rely on other towns for services. The sense of place and investment in a community asset or developing public social capital locally is advanced when area libraries “*compete*” to serve their own residents. Multiple copies of new best sellers, expanded hours, increased children programs, additional PCs and current software, comfortable reading areas, after school and teen programs are improvements that residents will welcome. Finding solutions to issues related to parking, space for programs, a drive through book drop and teen programming will foster a great deal of good will for the library among residents.

Public Relations, publicity, marketing

Participants feel that the Ramsey Free Public Library needs to renew its message and image, through a very visible marketing, branding and identity campaign, focusing on two to three features and benefits of the library, as well as explaining to residents the offerings that are available to them today. The library should consider adopting a new logo and color scheme to reflect a new millennium, which can be used on all library material including the library card. Since many participants are infrequent users they were surprised when they heard about services that are offered in the library and the full array of services need to be explained in a brochure, video, the website and other formats. Many residents are familiar with the BCCLS website where they search for a book but are unfamiliar with the Library’s website and its wealth of information and resources.

Library support and funding

Overall, participants are unaware of library funding and the public and private levels of support. Many participants would agree to support expanded space and programs with additional public and private funds and strongly feel that it is important to reintroduce the Ramsey community to the library with a dynamic, renewed message about the library and its future.

Conclusion

The Ramsey Free Public Library has achieved many important improvements to services and collections in the past few years. The leadership of the Library Director and Library Board has diligently guided the library toward meeting many of the library needs of Ramsey residents.

Among some of the exciting indicators of increased use and increased services by the library are: Circulation increased in FY 2002 over the previous year by almost 14%, while program attendance increased by 25% in the same period.

The library is now well poised to fulfill many of the long term library needs of the community for the next 5-10 years. The potential addition of needed space and funding to house the collections, services, staff and residents will help create a modern full service library for the beginning of the 21st century.

Introduction

What does the future of public library service in Ramsey, New Jersey look like? What kind of services should be provided for the community as it continues to grow and change? What can be done to increase the number of residents using the library? What kind of library facility is required to meet resident's needs for the beginning of the 21st Century? What are some of the services, programs and collections that residents want to meet their needs in a changing community? Is the Ramsey Free Public Library losing residents to other BCCLS libraries in the area that have already modernized or renovated. If library planners, community leaders and library users desire a modern, full service library, how can it be funded? Are residents of Ramsey willing to fund a modern full service library and how will they fund it? These were among the questions that were explored with community residents in a series of focus groups held in April 2003.

The Ramsey Free Public Library Trustees engaged the services of Library Development Solutions, a library-consulting firm from Princeton Junction, NJ to conduct a series of focus group discussions with community residents to discuss their suggestions for improved and future library services. The purpose of the meetings was to listen to community concerns about the library, to provide participants with an opportunity to offer input about the community's information needs to the Library Board, and to discuss options for supporting improved library services. The Library Board and library leaders believe that information from the focus groups will assist their ability to make important decisions about the allocation of library resources and facilities improvements to meet demands for library programs and services in Ramsey.

Many improvements have been made in the past 2-3 years as the library focuses on meeting community needs. The needs assessment in this report is supplemented by a September 2002 Library user survey. This information, along with the outcome from planned meetings of the Library Planning Committee will assist the Library Board in entering the next stage of fulfilling their mission by providing the type of facility and funding that Ramsey residents deserve and expect.

The outcome of this process will lead to a Library Long Range Plan that:

- I. Identifies community needs and appropriate library service responses. The Ramsey Free Public Library will identify and prioritize its roles in the community, address the impact of technology on its operations and determine the most efficient use of funds to deliver public library services.
- II. The plan can also be used as a marketing tool to educate and inform funders, both public and private, on the library needs of the community and the financial resources necessary to meet those needs.

Seven focus group sessions were held in April 2003 in the library community meeting room, the middle school and the senior center at the Knights of Columbus. Approximately 80 people (including library staff) attended the sessions. Each group was asked a series of open-ended questions designed to stimulate discussion about the library including its future and importance to the community's quality of life. The comments obtained from the groups provide important information about Ramsey residents' perceptions about libraries as well as specific suggestions for service and facility improvements for their library.

There were similarities among the various group's comments, as well as some distinct differences in terms of their needs and interests depending on their age and current library and information needs. The participants represented a wide cross section of the community. They were recruited through the following:

- I. Requests from Library Board members
- II. Requests from members of the Long Range Planning Committee
- III. Library staff members asking users and non users, readers and non readers, to participate

The information from the focus groups will be a valuable tool for the Library Director, Trustees, staff and planners as they consider the future library needs of residents.

About the Process

Focus groups are group interviews in which people are asked a series of open-ended questions in order to obtain information about their perceptions and attitudes about a topic. In Ramsey, we explored their satisfaction and dissatisfaction with current library services, awareness of funding, ideas for improvement, and their vision of what an "amazing library" would look like. Unlike surveys, focus groups do not yield quantifiable data that can be easily categorized. Instead the discussions provide the researcher with qualitative, anecdotal information that can be used to assess perceptions about the topic or issue being discussed. The data from these groups is helpful in obtaining "snapshots" of where a community may be in terms of its attitudes about libraries in general and their library in particular.

The following are topics that were discussed with the various groups, which included suggestions from the Planning Committee:

- I. Changes and trends that have taken place in Ramsey and in the area over the last few years that will impact library service today and in the future
- II. The role of the Library on the quality of life in Ramsey
- III. Types of information needs and where information is obtained
- IV. Why do you use the library and what other libraries do you use
- V. A description of an amazing or perfect library

- VI. Satisfaction with library services, programs and facilities
- VII. Suggested areas of improvement for library services, programs and facilities
- VIII. Community awareness about the library and its services
- IX. Reasons for library non-use and any factors inhibiting use
- X. Understanding of and willingness to support library funding

Focus Group Participants included:

- I. Students
- II. Senior Citizens
- III. Parents of young children
- IV. Library Staff
- V. Friends of the Library and library volunteers
- VI. Board members

a)

Other residents of Ramsey

Each session lasted approximately 1½ to 2 hours. Similar questions were asked of all groups to ensure comparable data. Students were asked a specific set of questions to target their study, homework and general interests. Comments from all sessions were recorded and transcribed to create a record of the meetings.

Each of the focus group discussions was lively and encouraged debate about what the future of library service in Ramsey should be. Participants were excited to be asked for their input, appreciated the opportunity to engage in a dialog about the library with other residents, and offered useful suggestions and ideas about the library.

Summary of Key Findings

Focus group participants agreed on many issues and shared common concerns for the future of the Library and library services. There was agreement among the participants that:

- I. Ramsey has experienced modest but steady growth in the past few years, including increasing populations of retirees and seniors as well as young families and children who have recently moved to the area. Ramsey has been experiencing a transition from a quieter environment to a maturing suburban one accompanied with suburban issues. Newer residents are perceived as more affluent and have higher expectations for public services. Newer homes are being built throughout the community, especially an increase in renovations and larger rebuilds.

I. Area residents have many choices today to spend their free and

leisure time outside of their homes. In addition to popular bookstores, residents comment that they use other libraries in the area including Ridgewood, Mahwah, Suffern, Wyckoff and Upper Saddle River for materials, programs and sometimes for browsing. School activities, sports and entertainment venues are also popular destinations for area residents. Resident's lifestyles have become increasingly time starved and many households today are dual income families. Residents have less time than in the past for leisurely activities during the week and prefer those that are convenient and easy to use.

- I. Accessible hours, computers, Internet access, renewed collections including popular and current materials and programming for adults and children and access to community meeting space are issues that residents want the library board to address in order to keep the library current with the needs and expectations of Ramsey residents. Residents view the library primarily as a place where they would like to browse for new books, videos and DVDs and as an after school destination for students to research and work on homework. There is a demand for multiple copies of current books and videos. They view the library as a central location for community gathering and meetings and the first destination of choice to use a computer or gain access to the Internet, preferably without a long wait. Residents appreciate existing children's programming and believe that the library is the perfect place for additional adult programming about a wide range of topics.

- I. Residents view the library as a future "hub" of Ramsey life. They see the library as a symbol of the public ownership of the town and a stable central presence for public use. At the same time, they do not view the future of the library as a stagnant public facility, but as a dynamic and vital expression of community involvement and activity in Ramsey.

Initial Conclusions and Recommendations

The following conclusions and recommendations highlight the comments and suggestions expressed by area residents during the focus group sessions. The recommendations are intended to encourage and stimulate additional use of the library by the whole community and assist planners in thinking about expanded space and services.

1. Technology

The Ramsey Free Public Library needs to offer additional access to computers and the Internet and more technology instruction for residents. The challenge faced by libraries in offering technology is how to teach staff and the public to use the equipment to support effective Internet searching and other computer applications. Seniors raised issues relating to

access and instruction, a number commenting that the replacing of the card catalog and use of the OPAC has not been easy for them and they need one-on-one training in catalog use. This generation has been negatively impacted by library automation when we assume that they know how to use the catalog without an intensive effort to instruct and assist them.

Students and parents requested access to computers for after school use and reported that the number available does not meet the demand, especially for Internet use and Word Processing. Students report that they use software such as MS Word, PowerPoint and Publisher in school; however the Library has just one computer with a very dated copy of MS Word installed. Only 3 of the 158 respondents to the library's survey reported having used the computer in the library for Word Processing. An overwhelming majority of participants expect the library to be the destination of first choice for computer and Internet use and instruction and for friendly, knowledgeable staff to assist them in PC, catalog and Internet use. They commented that the library should be the leader in offering high quality hardware and software for users and that the library should be well ahead of the schools in these areas.

Almost all of the participants are unaware of the reference databases available through the Library as well as the NJ State Library and are not aware of QandANJ.org.

Most of the participants in the focus groups were not users of the library's website, though were familiar with the BCCLS website and catalog. A small minority of participants in the focus groups were aware that reference databases were available to them through the site and that library card holders can perform database searches from home and school. The website is a necessary component of the library, as a virtual 24/7 branch of the library for Ramsey residents. A dedicated, well maintained interactive web site will increase public awareness and involvement in library services through features that inform the community about library events, calendars and collections and allow linkages through BCCLS to search the catalog and renew or reserve materials. A public relations and identity campaign for the library should emphasize this component of library service. The time saving and convenient benefits of linking to the Library databases should also be promoted as the best entry to accurate information for students and families in Internet research.

2. Access

Expand access to the library by adding convenience and hours when residents can get to the library.

Residents want the Library to become more convenient and accessible with adequate and available parking, signage and lighting, inside and

outside of the library. Participants commented and applauded the availability of the meeting space, since space is hard to find and they believe that providing meeting space for small groups epitomizes the role of a public space like the library. Though this space is heavily used by various groups and there is a long waiting list for use, they believe that promoting additional public meeting space in the library will build a closer relationship between the library and the community.

Teens commented that additional hours were needed on weekends for them to use the library to work on school projects and meet with friends. Additional Sunday hours were requested and summer Saturday hours so that families can use the library together.

Limited parking and returning materials continue to pose barriers of use among segments of the population, especially young parents with small children and seniors. The library should review these barriers and determine near and long term remedies to ease access for these segments of the population. A drive through book drop and additional weekend hours should be considered.

3. Programs, collections and space for children, teens and adults

Participants applaud the hard work that the library does in providing many children's programs and quality staff for preschoolers. Parents believe that the library can become an even more welcoming place for the community by targeting new programming for teens, preteens, children and preschool children. Residents see the library as an active place for children from preschool story times, toddler programs, activities for elementary and middle school children, after school tutoring and homework help, all the way through SAT and college application workshops. They comment that the library should be the place in the community where adults can visit for programs on computers, book clubs, hobbies or general entertainment. They see a natural fit between adult programs in the library and the need for the library to be the hub of activity in their community. Newer, younger and affluent residents have higher expectations for adult and children's programming than the library currently offers. Many participants believe that increased children's and adult programming will provide long lasting support for the library and a library expansion program.

Teen and preteen use of the Library is recognized as a challenge for the Library. Middle School and High School age residents have been missing from the library for a few years and a new effort to attract them and offer quality collections and programs will be welcome.

Seniors would like to see a similar focus on their need to gather and read with a pleasant area in the library for them. Older participants request that

the Library buy multiple copies of daily newspapers for early morning reading.

The library should review the space that is used for quiet reading and discuss alternate areas for seniors and retirees to browse and gather. Long term solutions with an expansion of space will resolve this need and provide a comfortable, accessible space for seniors.

4. The Basics

Focus group participants identify many environmental factors that prohibit or discourage library use. A common comment has been that seating and furniture, lighting, and shelving may prohibit ease of use. Many residents commented that the library is “dark” and could definitely become more cheerful and welcoming. Many frequent users also commented that the library needs to be warmer, brighter and more inviting.

A concern to community participants (as well as staff) is the abundance of dated materials and the lack of new fresh collections. Residents expect to see multiple copies of new titles and library shelves stocked with recent fiction and current non fiction titles. They also expect to see recent video and DVD releases and new CDs and Audio Books. Many times best sellers are not readily available, (either in the library or through the BCCLS catalog) and many participants, including staff, reported waiting a number of weeks to receive a reserved book. Staff commented that extensive weeding has occurred and an ongoing effort is needed to review and remove books that have not circulated in 2-3 years as well as old and damaged materials. Additionally, there are many old, worn titles that should be replaced with clean new copies. An active replacement fund and purchasing process can begin to compliment the weeding process.

Satisfying customer demand for recent best sellers can contribute to promoting additional good will and praise for the library since current expectations are low for finding new titles. Since there are usually only one to two dozen wildly popular new titles each year, there are a few alternatives to achieving multiple copies without a major expenditure.

I. The Library and Schools

Though comments about the local school system were highly favorable, participants expect the library and the schools to support the school curriculum with relevant materials throughout the year in the library and for assistance with school homework and projects, also during the summer with books available for the summer reading program. Students commented about the 10th grade research project and the 12th grade genealogy project as times that the library can offer specific assistance with materials and research. Though most participants understand that the library and school system operate with different missions, they expect

greater collaboration between the two community assets to assist their children to attain individual and community wide achievement. Similarly, there is a general public sentiment that expects increased sharing of resources and assets by public organizations to justify increased taxes and spending.

I. Collaboration

Participants believe that the library must renew its efforts at outreach to the community in all that it does. There are residents in Ramsey who are not library card holders, especially teens and working adults. The library needs to actively engage community and private agencies that are involved in child care, cultural, educational, athletic and civic activities in a collaborative effort to bring library services to all segments of the community. New residents can receive a library packet explaining the library services that are available to them, the location of the library and how to get their library card.

7. The Ramsey Free Public Library - Identity

A renewed campaign is needed to inform all residents about all that the library offers and the value the library brings to the entire community. An identity campaign using a recognizable logo, colors, and icons, in all library information and materials (including the library card) can provide a recognizable image of the library. The library needs to publicize itself as the primary place to visit for community information and resources, for popular and current materials, for PC and Internet use and instruction, for children's, teen and adult programming and for after school support activities.

More than 60% of residents are registered library card holders. A public relations and identity campaign can help to increase the registration percent to include more residents. Registration is a positive leading indicator of library support in a community for local officials.

8. Advocacy and Funding

The majority of participants are unaware of the library's funding. Participants in the focus groups commented that the library needs to continue to clearly state its case and advocate for library support and use. A clear, concise explanation of library needs to meet community demand is needed to encourage and support library advocates as they discuss library improvements and possible expansion. Similarly, a fresh campaign to increase the size of the Friends group will go far in developing additional support for improvement.

Increased private funding can also be pursued to help develop a level of sustainable funding for programs, collections and services that residents have requested.

An innovative and simple docent program can be an additional source of strong library advocacy in Ramsey. Participants expressed the desire to volunteer and assist the library in providing excellent service to residents. Current volunteers feel that their role can be enhanced to provide additional information and assistance to residents without interfering with library staff’s role. The Board and the Director should review the volunteer program and add a docent program for volunteers with greater library skills and experience. The role of docents can be narrowly defined to allow them appropriate and helpful contact with library users.

Discussion of Findings

Quality of Life

When residents were asked what changes have taken place over the past few years that might affect library service in the future, they discussed important issues relating to the quality of life in Ramsey. Participants commented that the modest but steady population growth has had an effect on all other issues, especially infrastructure concerns. (See Table1) An increase in population has created new trends in traffic, schools and leisure in Ramsey.

Participants also note that many of the characteristics that they like most about their community have been changing in the past few years, especially the small town - like atmosphere of the community. Young families have moved to the area and arrive with increased expectations about public services. Along with the increase in residential and some commercial development, car traffic has increased as a transition to a more suburban and bedroom community lifestyle. The senior population as well as the student population has increased in recent years in the community.

Year	Population
1970	12,571
1980	12,899
1990	13,288
2000	14,351

Table1: US Census Bureau

Changes in the way that people communicate and seek information through computers, the Internet, and other media is significant as residents adapt to these methods. In fact, the use of computers was reported by participants to be a part of everyday life, including seniors, teens and parents. Other comments about changes in the community include:

I. ~~Increased competition for leisure time activities~~

- II. Increase in dual income families
- III. Increase in reliance on computers and the Internet
- IV. The schools have become more crowded

Ramsey Free Public Library's Role in the Community

During the focus group discussions, participants were prompted to think about the role of the library in the community and the potential impact on the quality of life. Participants comment that the library can address needs that are not being filled elsewhere, including certain senior services, cultural services, children's programs and teen activities. If other organizations perform similar functions, participants expect the library to collaborate with them to provide better overall service rather than providing a redundant service, such as the new senior center programs.

The primary roles that are envisioned by participants include the expanded use of the library as a center for community activities and meetings, a popular destination for after school activities for students from kindergarten through high school, including research, tutoring and homework help centers; and as primary destinations for learning and using publicly accessible technology for a variety of purposes including computer and Internet use and reference databases. Above all they view the Library as a place to find popular and current materials and programs.

Among the additional roles that are envisioned:

- I. The library extends life for older people – a place to meet with others, reading and listening to materials for information or entertainment.
- II. A link to the schools and families to provide support, technology and resources for students all year round.
- III. A door to learning and reading for toddlers and pre-k children.
- IV. A center for community information and a gathering place, a hub for the entire community. A resource for families – something for all ages under one roof – there is no other public space that can do this.
- V. Space for community groups and members of the community to get together. A facility that cares about the community and supports community development of public spaces.
- VI. A public non profit space to browse and find current and popular materials in various formats
- VII. A support partner for the town and other organizations and agencies in the economic development of the community

What other area libraries do you use and why?

Participants were asked to think about the libraries they use and the reasons for using them. The intent of the question is to stimulate discussion about the services and collections of area libraries and adopt those that residents value the most. Participant's comments include:

- I. **Suffern:** Perfect library. Drive through, café, great children’s area and great collections and programs – terrific ambiance. Children friendly. Very inviting.
- II. **Mahwah:** Broader newer collection, bigger selection of DVDs and videos. Good Sunday programs. Better children’s selection. More room for adults when children are in a program. Seven day videos.
- III. **Upper Saddle River:** Self contained children’s area. Very spacious. Extensive collection. Quiet spaces, comfortable and pleasant environment. You have “...peace of mind to enjoy the experience.”
- IV. **Ridgewood:** Weekly movies and foreign films. Larger collection. Convenient.

Participants note that however much they enjoy some of features of other libraries; they lose the sense of community when they use them because it is not Ramsey.

The Amazing Library

Participants were asked to imagine an amazing library and think about other exemplary libraries and public spaces they have seen and used. When asked to do this they were asked not to consider cost and expense, but to let their imagination explore the many possibilities that a library could provide for a community. In discussing an amazing library, participants are able to reveal ideas that they may not associate with their traditional view of libraries. This enables them to think about the future of libraries in general and specifically about Ramsey’s Library in meeting their individual and community needs. Many comments reflect the desire for comfort, convenience and access in a community space; a sense of “place” for residents to gather and call their own, whether through individual or group activity.

The overriding theme in these comments and in the discussion centered on the desire to have a public space in the community that is welcoming, comfortable and designed to be used for various information, entertainment and social activities. Participants express a need for a public space that rivals the best of the chain book stores and cafes as well as any other for-profit space that offers similar services and materials. Comments about an amazing library include:

- I. A learning center for the community
- II. A reading room with comfy chairs, natural and accessible lighting and a quiet environment
- III. Cozy and comfortable seating throughout the library
- IV. Small private study areas
- V. A self contained accessible children’s area
- VI. A children’s craft area
- VII. A café or snack area
- VIII. A wireless network to use notebooks throughout the library

- IX. An outdoor area connected to the library for warm weather reading and events, like a courtyard. Create a “joy of the library experience.”
- X. A film screening room and a listening room
- XI. Ample and available parking
- XII. Instruction by librarians in how to use computers and how to do research
- XIII. High speed Internet access and full time assistance for users from a knowledgeable person – does not have to be staff
- XIV. Library open every Saturday all year round
- XV. Organized after school programs-everyday-especially for teens and preteens
- XVI. A drive through drop box and pick up for materials
- XVII. Large collection of DVDs and Audio Books
- XVIII. Child size bathrooms
- XIX. Promotional display for new books and other new materials
- XX. “Bring it up a notch”

What are you satisfied with at the library?

Participants were eager to comment about the things in the Ramsey Free Public Library that they like and satisfied them. Participants were quick to commend the library on improvements over the past two to three years and about the programs that have received public attention, such as the children’s programs, art exhibits, book clubs assisted by the Library and the BCCLS cooperation. The entire staff in the library receives very high marks from the participants, especially the children’s area staff. Positive comments include:

- I. The location
- II. The director and staff
- III. Inter library loan – the ability to get materials from other libraries
- IV. The hours
- V. The 9 am opening
- VI. Sunday hours
- VII. The catalog and BCCLS
- VIII. The library has become more welcoming in the past two years
- IX. The meeting room
- X. The art exhibits
- XI. Books on CD collection
- XII. Lots of opportunity for change

Residents throughout Ramsey are encouraged that the library continues to improve and address resident’s needs through discussions like the focus groups. Frequent users view the library as a familiar presence in the community and would like to see it become even more vital and dynamic in the future. Non users

also view the library as important to the community, though many are infrequent visitors or visit other libraries in the area. Many participants believe that expectations for increased services and improved collections are growing in Ramsey and they expect the library to try and meet the current needs as well as plan through expansion and creative fundraising to meet future needs of the community through a library expansion program.

What can be improved?

Comments include those about access, collections, children's and adult programming, computers and instruction in use, parking, and lighting. Expanded space, outdated and worn materials and the library environment and atmosphere were the main areas in which participants would like to see improvements. Participants in most groups mention the need for additional comfortable seating and better lighting and the desire to find new and current materials in the collections. Participants also comment about the need for increased public awareness and publicity about the library and additional programming for children and new programming for teens and adults. All groups mentioned the need to have more computers available for public use and instruction in PC, Internet, catalog and database use. Comments include:

- I. Solve the parking problem when there are programs
- II. More and better computers. "I rarely see anyone using the PC with word processing on it."
- III. Faster Internet connection. It is too slow
- IV. Better and newer computers. Proper chairs for the computer workstations
- V. Comfortable seating. In general it is uncomfortable throughout the library
- VI. Drive through drop box open 24 hours – not necessarily connected to the building
- VII. More funding-both private and public
- VIII. Expanded hours, especially weekends and Summer Saturday hours
- IX. Distinct and larger children's area and teen area
- X. More current collections – there is a lot of older books in the collection.
- XI. Interesting and entertaining adult programs
- XII. A wireless network in the library so we can connect inside with our notebooks

Many of the critical comments concern the age and availability of materials as well as the layout of the library and the need for additional space to meet various needs. The library is undersized and/or in need of space reorganization, according to residents and is unable to meet the library needs of all segments of the population. They also believe they cannot quickly get newer materials such as best

sellers at the library so they go to Borders, Barnes and Noble, or Amazon.com. Their perception is that older books and materials dominate the library's collections and would like to see a commitment to providing greater depth of newer materials. Developing the collection of popular and current materials for children and adults is an important priority for some of the participants. They prefer to see new books, videos, DVDs and CDs in order to use the library for popular fiction and nonfiction resources. High School students especially commented on the lack of newer non fiction titles that can assist them in school projects.

Almost 50% of survey respondents reported that they are only **somewhat satisfied or not satisfied** with the availability and comfort of computer workstations, study tables and casual seating in the library.

Priorities: If you could change one thing

In response to the suggestion that the participants could change one thing about the library, the comments reflect those areas that they care about the most and that they feel should receive priority. The most often repeated comments about changing one thing in the library concern the lagging technology available and the desire to upgrade the collections to newer copies and current titles and to create a more welcoming and warm environment. Closely following in comments is the need for a separate children's area, an improvement in the facilities (space, layout, seating, and lighting) and the expectation for additional programming for adults, teens and children. Also included were comments about:

- I. More books, more books, more books – clean and new
- II. Upgrade computers and more computers
- III. A trained reference librarian
- IV. More comfortable seating
- V. Solve the parking problem
- VI. Create a quiet space in the library for reading, research or study
- VII. Improve the collections-get rid of old, worn materials – multiple copies of new best sellers
- VIII. Better use of existing space
- IX. Make the library more attractive to teens and preteens – after school and tutoring programs
- X. Increase funding and fund raising – private and public
- XI. The phone system
- XII. The HVAC system

Building Community Support

Participants were asked about methods for building awareness and support for the

library. They offered many good suggestions to get the message about the library to the entire community. Participants agreed that the Library is a well known and used facility but the full array of services and materials that are available at the library are not. Included in the suggestions are:

- I. Reeducate the community with a new message and image about the library – use eye catching and interesting graphics and wording
- II. Continue to build a strong Friends of the Library and volunteer program
- III. Collaborate with the schools to form a strong partnership in support of after school programs – encourage student use
- IV. Develop a library card incentive program in which local businesses would offer discounts or specials for library card holders
- V. Weekly newspaper ads or announcements – the library newsletter emailed to all homes
- VI. Reach out to community organizations and business groups
- VII. Market the library to parents so they know how the library will benefit their children and their family

87% of survey respondents reported that the Library is **very important** to the Ramsey community.

Funding

A discussion about the funding support for the library revealed that few participants are aware of the current funding. Most but not all participants said they would support increased public support for increased or new library services, and additional public and private funding for such items as improved collections, additional PCs and programming for children and adults. Participants believe that a commitment of private funds would be helpful to insure a commitment of public funding for a library improvement or expansion project.

Conclusion

The Ramsey Free Public Library has achieved many important improvements to service, collections and its facility in the past few years, through the leadership of the Library Director and Library Board as they have diligently guided the library toward meeting many of the library needs of Ramsey residents.

The library is now well poised to fulfill many of the long term library needs of the community for the next 5-10 years. The improvement or expansion of needed space and funding to house the collections, services and staff will help create a **modern full service library for the beginning of the 21st century.**

Ramsey Focus Groups

Seniors

4/16/03

14 participants

- 4 without library cards
- 5 frequent users
- 5 infrequent users
- 2 have visited website

If you do not use the library what are the reasons?

- I. Lack of easy transportation to the library
- II. Stopped reading years ago during working years – trying to start again
- III. Not enough copies of desirable fiction at the library
- IV. Waiting list is too long
- V. “I went to the library with a list of eight books that I wanted – none were readily available.”
- VI. It is easier to buy a book at the bookstore than to wait for a book from the library

If you use the library – why?

- I. Theatre tickets
- II. The art work
- III. Value line
- IV. Making copies
- V. Go to the meeting room
- VI. Video tapes, DVDs
- VII. “My computer is broken so I go to the library to use the one there for the Internet”
- VIII. Literacy Volunteers of America – literacy tutoring
- IX. Books

Changes in Ramsey that will affect library services

- I. New languages heard in town include Spanish, Japanese and other Asian languages, Russian
- II. Increase in taxes
- III. Increase in property values
- IV. Increase in traffic
- V. Increase in school age children
- VI. New senior housing (Woodlands) community built
- VII. Proposed transit train station near Rt. 17
- VIII. Neighborhoods changing with many renovations

What do you like about the library?

- I. The location
- II. The director and staff
- III. Children's programs
- IV. The hours
- V. Art gallery
- VI. The catalog

What would you like to see improved?

- I. Parking
- II. Adult programs
- III. More books in the collection – fiction and nonfiction, classics, etc...
- IV. Sponsor book clubs
- V. PC, Internet and catalog instruction for residents
- VI. More and better PCs ("I rarely see anyone using the PC with word processing on it.")

Amazing library

- I. Atrium for reading
- II. Welcoming, comfortable environment
- III. A reading room with comfy chairs, natural and accessible lighting and a quiet environment
- IV. Knowledgeable, friendly staff
- V. A viewing and listening room
- VI. A café
- VII. Books by favorite authors – Barbara Rogan, Eugenia Price – cannot find their works in the library – the library should have titles and authors that are popular and heard on TV, radio, etc...
- VIII. Adult programs, discussion groups, book clubs, seminars – an active and dynamic place for adult learning and discussion
- IX. A learning center for the community

Roles for the Ramsey Library

- I. Reading
- II. Learning center
- III. An information center

Change one thing about the library

- I. More books, more books, more books – clean and new
- II. More books on tape and on CD
- III. Separate children's space
- IV. More meeting space

General Group

4/15/03

8 Participants

What is unique about Ramsey?

- I. Small town community – it is not geared around a shopping center
- II. Our neighborhoods
- III. Unusually good community spirit
- IV. Great place to raise a family
- V. Its history
- VI. Everything is here – very convenient
- VII. Community involvement
- VIII. Excellent schools
- IX. We value education

What other libraries do you use and why?

- I. Mahwah – close by, bigger, better children’s selection, more room for adults when kids are in a program
- II. Allendale – convenient
- III. Upper Saddle River – kid’s collection, children’s area, very spacious, software selection for lending, extensive collection, large adult area
- IV. Midland Park – “best kept secret” in area libraries, good location

Change that is important to the library

- I. Huge influx of young families, more affluent and educated
- II. “knockdowns” – and rebuilding of McMansions
- III. Increased residential and commercial development
- IV. Population has become more diverse
- V. Spanish and Asian languages
- VI. Increase in property values and taxes
- VII. New train transit station
- VIII. Main street is becoming more upscale – loss of bowling alley and movie theatre – places to connect with community
- IX. Beautification of Main Street
- X. Transition of neighborhoods

What do you like about the library?

- I. The hours
- II. Staff
- III. The mystery collection
- IV. Location
- V. Mrs. B. and children’s programs
- VI. Circulation desk location

What can be improved?

- I. The video policy
- II. No activities for 3 through 12th grades
- III. Parking
- IV. More meeting space
- V. Bigger building

Amazing library

- I. A wireless network to use notebooks throughout the library
- II. Current PCs and software – as good or better than the schools
- III. Differentiated space for different activities
- IV. Adequate meeting space
- V. Active Reader's advisories – printed and verbal
- VI. Staff instruction for PC use
- VII. Staff that is friendly, knowledgeable, welcoming, not intimidating
- VIII. A lot of interesting adult programs
- IX. Authors and book signings – local, state and national authors – adult and children
- X. Intergenerational activities – tutoring by students for seniors on PCs
- XI. Small and home business services –faxing, copying, etc...
- XII. Art exhibits and cultural programs
- XIII. Café
- XIV. Outdoor courtyard for warm weather reading and lounging and programs
- XV. Well maintained aquariums
- XVI. Media rooms – films, music, etc...
- XVII. A theater
- XVIII. After school programs for homework help, tutoring, etc...
- XIX. Transportation to the library
- XX. A teacher's collection to assist teachers
- XXI. A collection of all textbooks that are used in the schools for students at night and during weekends

Change one thing

- I. After school and tutoring program for children
- II. More space
- III. 3rd grade through 12th grade programming – we need programs, collections and activities for students
- IV. adult programs
- V. widen the entrance and exit to the library from the street – the turn is dangerous

Other

- I. Welcome children of all ages
- II. Analyze space allocation and space use to use the space better – especially use children's space better and the back of the reference area on the right side where there is rarely anyone in the library

General

4/15/03

11 participants

Things we want mentioned during this discussion:

- I. PC use and instruction
- II. The quality of the collection
- III. Use of the catalog
- IV. Growth and space use
- V. The facility
- VI. Programs

Other libraries used:

- I. Ridgewood – convenient, larger collection
- II. Mahwah – the collection is bigger
- III. Waldwick – the video collection is better - current and more titles
- IV. Wyckoff – less noisy, efficient design and availability of books
- V. Allendale – the children’s selection
- VI. USR – very comfortable environment, “peace of mind to enjoy the experience” “very pleasant atmosphere”
- VII. Ramapo – breadth of collection, access to Rutgers and government docs

Change that is important to the library

- I. Population increase
- II. New senior space in the KOC
- III. Spanish heard in town
- IV. Newer residents have higher expectations for service
- V. Lot of people in job transition - home business and unemployed
- VI. Expectations for easy technology use to find information – Internet, etc...

Things we like about the library

- I. The staff
- II. The hours
- III. Location – centrally located
- IV. The building
- V. Books on tape and CD

Things that can be improved

- I. The hours
- II. The building
- III. Internet connection is too slow
- IV. Parking and entrance/exit to the parking lot
- V. Parking lot lighting
- VI. Clean rest rooms

- VII. Better and newer PCs
- VIII. Proper chairs for the PC workstations
- IX. Comfortable seating – in general it is uncomfortable throughout the library
- X. Larger area for children’s programs
- XI. Better collection of plant and gardening books

Amazing library:

- I. Lighting such be natural and incandescent
- II. Separate space for children’s activities, PCs and reading room
- III. Comfortable Barnes and Noble like chairs and couches
- IV. A café
- V. Child size bathrooms
- VI. Promotional display for new books and any other new materials the library has
- VII. Video and audio production capabilities
- VIII. New titles in a living room environment –“what’s new” area for browsing and book selection
- IX. A fountain with plants
- X. Email only PCs for quick use
- XI. Kid friendly librarians, very friendly and knowledgeable
- XII. PC instruction for staff and public
- XIII. Adult programming

Library Roles:

- I. Information, resource and referral center for the community
- II. Culturally stimulating – arts, music – should be the leader in cultural offerings in the community
- III. Center of the community to reconnect with each other and gathering place

Change one thing:

- I. Upgrade PCs and workstations –now
- II. Internal signing to workstations, subject headings for collections, etc...
- III. A trained reference librarian
- IV. Better furniture
- V. Build a second floor
- VI. Better chairs in the newspaper area – buy more than one copy of each paper and more papers– they are used fast and then missing – can create a place for seniors to come and read the paper in the morning
- VII. Change the layout – need a change – easier flow of space
- VIII. More newer books
- IX. Better lighting
- X. separate space for children

Parents of young children

4/09/03

18 participants

Website use – 3

Changes in the community

- I. larger school population – K-3
- II. home reassessment higher
- III. people staying in the community – less transient
- IV. retirees staying longer
- V. school expansion
- VI. new NJT transit station coming
- VII. increased traffic

Other libraries used:

- I. Mahwah – 7 day videos, broader newer selection, bigger selection of DVDs and videos,
- II. Suffern – a café, drive through pick up and drop off, great children’s area and collection and programs, the café to meet people and chat
- III. Allendale – ease of use, accessible toddler collection
- IV. USR – self contained children’s area
- V. Chain bookstores – inviting, easy to use, fun,. Bright, colorful

What do you like about the library?

- I. Mrs. B
- II. Children’s programs – a huge improvement in the past couple of years
- III. Become more welcoming in the past two years
- IV. Children’s collections are well marked
- V. Easy readers with school names on them
- VI. 9 am opening
- VII. Sunday hours
- VIII. Staff is responsive and courteous, children and parent friendly
- IX. ILL

Improvements:

- I. Not enough PCs for children
- II. Internet connection too slow
- III. 30 minutes too long when there is a wait for PC use
- IV. parking
- V. size of the library – too small
- VI. why use a password for Internet use
- VII. the catalog is confusing, impossible to use
- VIII. 4/5/6th graders do not come to the library – not much for them
- IX. physical environment not inviting
- X. Kids stand on the stools to reach the top shelves – dangerous

- XI. Throw away and replace the old, dirty and incomplete puzzles
- XII. Keep the book return open all the time
- XIII. Need a drive through book return box like other libraries have
- XIV. Easy readers are old, dirty and need replacement
- XV. Adult best sellers need multiple copies

Amazing Library:

- I. Copy Suffern
- II. Audio listening area
- III. Separate preschool area for reading, programs, crafts
- IV. Shelving age appropriate – easy to reach
- V. Programs for parents of young children while child is here
- VI. Book clubs
- VII. After school programs and study activities
- VIII. Café
- IX. Outdoor area for reading and programs
- X. Film nights
- XI. Playground
- XII. Easy to use touch screen catalog
- XIII. Age appropriate furniture for children
- XIV. Recliner, couches, comfortable chairs, -the atmosphere and environment is important
- XV. Cozy, clean space for children's use
- XVI. Author's visits to the library
- XVII. After school activities – all school are within walking distance
- XVIII. Drive through drop off and pick up
- XIX. Ample parking
- XX. Ample community meeting room space
- XXI. A very public volunteer program

You currently support the library with \$52 in per capita tax support

- I. Seems low
- II. Many users would support more
- III. Many seniors and others in the community would not support more

Staff

4/11/03

13 participants**Changes in the community**

- I. Increases in population
- II. Larger families and homes
- III. More younger children
- IV. Spanish language population growing
- V. Kids are always active – more activities – overscheduled children and adults
- VI. More dual income families
- VII. More after school programs
- VIII. More traffic
- IX. Increases in property values and taxes

What is unique and special about Ramsey?

- I. We have a real Main street and town center
- II. We have a train station
- III. A strong recreation department and programs
- IV. Good schools
- V. A calm and safe community

What are some barriers to providing service?

- I. Space
- II. The building
- III. Bad furniture
- IV. The circ desk is dysfunctional where it is
- V. Lack of staff
- VI. Lack of public PCs
- VII. Only one PC with an old version of Word(97)
- VIII. No fully functional PC with Internet and Word processing access
- IX. Old phone system
- X. The high and low shelving
- XI. Poor lighting
- XII. HVAC – mold and mildew
- XIII. Front of library too congested
- XIV. Layout doesn't offer good flow of people traffic and use

Rate the following:

- I. Internal communication – C – but getting better, need email for all staff and central bulletin board communication area
- II. External – C – need to market and popularize the website
- III. Collections – audio and video collection improving C+
- IV. Fiction and nonfiction – old – about 30% or more does not circulate
- V. Need new college search books, travel, gardening, home design, etc....

- VI. Children's – good – space not adequate
- VII. Seniors and retirees – good
- VIII. Reference – need reference staff

Underserved populations:

- I. Teens – where are they?
- II. Seniors – we could do better, reading area, PC use, best sellers, etc...
- III. Spanish language population – need Spanish books, newspapers for residents and out of town workers

Amazing Library:

- I. Adequate shelving
- II. Display areas
- III. Café
- IV. Separate Story time area
- V. Roomier staff work areas
- VI. Better staff PCs
- VII. Functional circulation area
- VIII. Deliveries being done off the floor
- IX. ILL done off the floor
- X. More staff trained to do reference
- XI. Bigger meeting space for the library to use for programs
- XII. Clean bathrooms
- XIII. Listening areas

Would do you like about the library?

- I. The staff
- II. Natural light in places
- III. The director
- IV. The customers
- V. It is safe
- VI. The policies – they have changed in the past two years
- VII. The meeting room

What can be improved?

- I. Parking
- II. Lighting in the parking lot
- III. Storage
- IV. The bathrooms
- V. Carpeting
- VI. The staff work areas
- VII. The furniture
- VIII. The circ desk changed, updated, moved
- IX. The landscaping
- X. The collection needs updating and additional weeding

XI. Display space

Change one thing:

- I. The circ desk
- II. More space – change the existing space
- III. Internal communication about policies and events
- IV. Staff work area increased
- V. The phone system
- VI. The HVAC – air quality
- VII. The noise level

Friends and Volunteers

11 participants

4/21/03

1 has visited library website

What is unique and special about Ramsey?

- I. The blend of interesting people
- II. Friendly people
- III. Low key
- IV. Closeness to NY
- V. A walking town
- VI. The variety of activities
- VII. Upscale-educated
- VIII. Small town atmosphere
- IX. Good place to retire
- X. Comfortable
- XI. Good schools

Changes in the community?

- I. Increase in dual income families
- II. Increase in school age population
- III. McMansions
- IV. New condos – for families and adults
- V. Increase in property values and taxes
- VI. Competitive housing market
- VII. New train station
- VIII. Increase in seniors

Other libraries you use and why?

- I. Ridgewood – weekly movies, foreign films
- II. Mahwah – Sunday programs
- III. Tuxedo – conducive – nice collection
- IV. Fairlawn – massive video collection
- V. Suffern – adult programs, reference

- VI. USB – quiet spaces, positive environment

Why don't you use the Ramsey Public Library?

- I. I buy my books from Amazon
- II. I go online for my information
- III. It is not a comfortable place
- IV. PCs are not available

What do you like about the Ramsey Library?

- I. Friendly staff
- II. Small and comfortable
- III. Lots of opportunity for change
- IV. Location
- V. The catalog
- VI. ILL
- VII. The Friends group
- VIII. Friends programs
- IX. Books and Books on CD
- X. The hours
- XI. Sunday hours

What would you like to improve?

- I. The parking
- II. The size and layout
- III. More seating
- IV. More computers – hardware and software
- V. A textbook program
- VI. More private funding
- VII. Create an exciting environment
- VIII. Technology – needs to be better than the schools – help community become self sufficient technology users – valuable tool for the community
- IX. The children's collection
- X. Never enough CDs and videos
- XI. Current college review and search books
- XII. More PBS type travel materials

Create an amazing library

- I. Quiet places
- II. A café with healthy offerings
- III. An audio/visual room – for listening and watching
- IV. Children's section leading to an outdoor playground – creating “joy of library experience”
- V. Programs for preteens and teens
- VI. Tutoring programs for K-12
- VII. Bigger meeting space

- VIII. Double the size of the existing space
- IX. “Bring it up a notch.” – learning environments that allow experiences for all the senses – touch, hear, see
- X. Think “out of the box” – provide answers for reference that they are not getting anywhere
- XI. Good strong connection between schools and library staff
- XII. After school programs
- XIII. Art work
- XIV. Comfortable furniture, more tables, better lighting

Change one thing

- I. More space
- II. Safe learning place for teens
- III. Attract more children, preteens and teens to the library
- IV. New collections and materials – especially best sellers
- V. PR to all new families who move into Ramsey – library cards
- VI. PR in general for all residents
- VII. Staff recommended books – readers advisories
- VIII. Docent program – volunteer opportunities

Students

5 participants – 3HS/2MS

No visible link to PI on school website

No link to QandANJ.org

LIBRARY

- I. Books
- II. Research
- III. Reserved and quiet
- IV. Shhhh
- V. Videos
- VI. The librarians don’t like us talking
- VII. Some of the librarians are grumpy

Reasons for non use

- I. The library doesn’t have the books that I like (SCI-FI)
- II. I go to Borders/Barnes and Noble
- III. I don’t like reading

Other libraries

- I. Wyckoff – wider selection, better hours

Ramsey Library

- I. Good books
- II. “Internet is too slow”

- III. Can't even get a computer to go online
- IV. Need PowerPoint, Word, and Publisher for homework. I am doing a project now using PowerPoint and Publisher – I have neither at home but they are on the school computers. I would use the library if they had these.
- V. It is too quiet

Amazing Library

- I. 4 different sections – books/technology/audiovisual/periodicals
- II. a café – if there was food or snacks – more teens would use the library
- III. more cheerful
- IV. like Borders
- V. MS Office Suite
- VI. Scanners/digital cameras for use and good color printers
- VII. Ability to save your document to your own drive (a default drive)
- VIII. Use of discs
- IX. Use of laptop ports in the library
- X. A wireless network
- XI. Comfortable chairs to just sit and read
- XII. Library is “uncool” – needs to be updated with new books, current titles, should have 2-3 copies of each, school textbooks, sports magazines

What kind of programs should the library have to attract more teens?

- I. Science fiction book lovers club
- II. Reading programs like the summer one
- III. College essay writing
- IV. Basic PC skills teens can teach older people
- V. All sophomores have to write a research paper – the library can have “10th Grade” Research weeks the two weeks before they are due, with hours, materials and assistance for us
- VI. All 12th graders have to do a genealogy project – the library can sponsor special 12th grade genealogy study and research nights, with research experts and examples

Comments from September 2002 Library survey

What have you seen in other libraries that you would like to see in Ramsey?

- I. Totally separate children's section
- II. Monthly list of acquisitions
- III. Better furniture
- IV. More room for programs
- V. More seating, better lighting, more up to date
- VI. Music room with free concerts
- VII. Reading area
- VIII. Evening adult programs
- IX. Rentals for best sellers

- X. More recent adult fiction
- XI. Bigger selection of new fiction
- XII. Children's craft area
- XIII. A separate room for children's activities
- XIV. More children's books
- XV. New books and magazines. I go to Mahwah for a wider selection of books
- XVI. Baby groups
- XVII. More Internet and Word Processing computers
- XVIII. Receipts for due dates
- XIX. Ability to print at the computer station. Have paper available for sale.
- XX. Many more books on CD
- XXI. Greater selection of audio books
- XXII. Better videos
- XXIII. Cultural programs – art, music, theater
- XXIV. Computer games
- XXV. Foreign language class for children
- XXVI. A nice flow from the interior of the building into a courtyard, individual carrels for private study
- XXVII. Much more pleasant physical environment- lighter – brighter- a place you want to go to
- XXVIII. Book clubs, monthly meeting with speaker (day time) bring lunch/craft workshop for adults, more computer classes where high schoolers teach seniors
- XXIX. The computers in the children's area are useless
- XXX. There are so many children in Ramsey – the children's area needs to be enlarged
- XXXI. Concerts that are open to the public
- XXXII. In general, things appear “old”. Could be more visually appealing.
- XXXIII. Friendly personnel (especially in dealing with children)
- XXXIV. Interactive child stations, nicer work stations, area for children's story reading, modern furnishings, attractive environment, larger inventory of books, more copies of newer books
- XXXV. More and comfortable seating
- XXXVI. Longer video loans
- XXXVII. Opportunities for volunteers to work with children

Recommendations for the future?

- I. Advertised book sales twice a year
- II. Continue the fine progress
- III. Librarians are helpful
- IV. Need more computers
- V. Better, faster computers
- VI. Remodel
- VII. More music CDs and videos
- VIII. Reading club for adults

- IX. Expand programs
- X. Better lighting
- XI. More books for children
- XII. More space in the children's area
- XIII. I think we need to update the books we have on the shelves and add to them.
We also need to update our reference material.
- XIV. More current computer books
- XV. Comfortable chairs
- XVI. Facelift – new titles-new DVDs and videos
- XVII. Saturday summer hours
- XVIII. Waiting for a book on reserve can take a while
- XIX. Just keep ordering new books
- XX. More new books
- XXI. More children's books
- XXII. Improve book selection
- XXIII. More relaxed areas for studying
- XXIV. Very disappointed at ending the take out picture program – it made Ramsey
Library unique
- XXV. More light at study tables
- XXVI. More Large Print as population ages, table lighting, signs for restrooms, open
for a few hours on Saturday in the summer
- XXVII. A course on using the catalog, I never get beyond the title
- XXVIII. Think about maybe changing the back of the library
- XXIX. I have noted great improvements in the library since the new director has
taken over
- XXX. Updated furnishings, remain current with advances in computer technology,
increasing liaison with the local schools, programs supportive of senior citizens
- XXXI. Continue the computer classes and expand them
- XXXII. More friendly phone messages about reserves
- XXXIII. Renovate and update
- XXXIV. More current books, tapes, videos, programs
- XXXV. Availability to print from the Internet
- XXXVI. Expand to a second floor, update meeting room so it is more inviting and
becomes a true community meeting place. A cafeteria like Ridgewood's would be
nice
- XXXVII. New chairs for reading
- XXXVIII. Sometimes I find that the most current books are not available. It would be
helpful to get the most current books.
- XXXIX. E-books
- XL. The library can use a facelift. A bit dreary and dated.
- XLI. More fund raising