



**Sustainable
Libraries
Initiative**

The latest news and updates from the [Sustainable Libraries Initiative](#)

NEWSLETTER



NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

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BREAKING NEWS

Sustainable Libraries Initiative will hold a [Community Gardening at Your Library](#) Webinar on December 13th at 11am. Please join us to learn more about planning and maintaining a garden. Our panelists will provide a brief presentation and then answer your questions. [Register here.](#)



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CERTIFICATION CELEBRATIONS!

This month we are highlighting two libraries that have recently achieved their [Sustainable Libraries Initiative](#) certification and one that has submitted their completed benchmarks. This issue will highlight each of their accomplishments while demonstrating the flexibility built into the [Sustainable Libraries Certification Program](#) (SLCP) which allows for each participating library to forge their own unique path towards certification. Our award-winning certification program offers a variety of benchmarks that may be completed as part of each library's unique certification path. The benchmarks that are chosen to be completed and the actions taken to complete them are designed with flexibility to meet the specific needs of each library and their community. These examples demonstrate that this process is guided by the individual library and their community resulting in different outcomes tailored for their own locations.



SOUTH HUNTINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Congratulations to [South Huntington Public Library](#) (SHPL), located in Suffolk County, New York and a member of the [Suffolk Cooperative Library System](#). They have completed their Sustainable Libraries Initiative Certification!

SHPL completed the environmental portion of their certification through the [Green Business Partnership](#) (GBP) Certification Program in October 2019. To achieve this designation, they converted the LED lighting in the interior and exterior of their building. They began turning off large banks of lights indoors on sunny days when the natural light was adequate. These efforts helped to reduce the amount of electricity purchased. They are looking into the feasibility of adding solar panels to their roof to further reduce their energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions.

The staff of SHPL was part of the process right from the start. Their initial survey indicated strong support for progress toward environmental conservation. A Green Team was formed and staff were asked to offer suggestions on how the library could work toward becoming more environmentally friendly. All of the suggestions were considered and many have already been implemented. A quarterly newsletter and interactive Green Team bulletin board keep the whole staff informed and engaged. The Green Team even created their own logo.



South Huntington Public Library's Learning Garden

SHPL CONTINUED

The library held programs and events to share ideas and information with their community. These included a [Project Drawdown](#) Book Discussion and an Earth Day celebration for staff. As a result of the program they have increased the number and accessibility of recycling bins in their library, hosted e-waste recycling events for the public, and increased their awareness of water usage throughout the building.

For the library's director, Janet Scherer, a compelling reason to complete the SLCP was the focus not just on the environmental aspects of sustainability, but also on the social equity dimensions encompassed by the SLI's use of the [triple bottom line](#) definition of sustainability. In July 2021, the library board passed an [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy](#) explicitly acknowledging support for the differences in characteristics that make their staff and community unique.

Continued on page 3.



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HIGHLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

Highland Public Library, member of the Mid-Hudson Library System and located in Ulster County, NY, have also recently completed their Sustainable Libraries Initiative Certification. Their submission is anchored by a detailed and community driven Plan of Service. This document sets forth a strategic plan that aligns with many of the goals of the SLCP. To generate this document, group discussions including a variety of library stakeholders such as staff, trustees, and community members, were held. Following these focused discussions, a survey was launched to gather even more information. This resulted in the creation of 6 strategic goals that the Highland Public Library addresses in detail in this document with objectives, activities, and set evaluation methods. In this plan, the library's commitment to environmentally sound and economically feasible practices is explicitly stated, aligning the principles of the SLCP with their goals.

Decisions made in the planning and construction of their building, long before the certification process began, considered energy efficiency. Their building is continuously insulated, minimizing air leaks and allowing efficient operation of their HVAC systems. Their water fixtures are low flow and lighting fixtures are high efficiency. Many of the construction materials used in their building contain recycled components. Their exterior lighting is LED and set on timers to control for energy use and light pollution. The landscaping surrounding the building incorporates native plants and large trees to provide shade. Continued on page 4.



South Huntington Public Library's Seed Library

SHPL CONTINUED

Their outreach efforts to the Spanish speaking members of their community includes bilingual story times, a portion of their website written in Spanish highlighting the programs and services available for Spanish speaking and English learners, Library Blog posts in Spanish, Spanish language book recommendations, and appointment scheduling for individual assistance from a Spanish speaking librarian. A focus on inclusivity is written into their updated Collections Development Policy, ensuring that this will have a lasting impact.

They have fostered collaborations with community partners such as the Huntington Youth Bureau, Scout groups, their local Chamber of Commerce, and the Huntington Arts Council resulting in an increased reach to many groups. The offer US Passport processing and hold voter registration drives to increase residents' access to government services. The SHPL also maintains disaster kits for their staff that contain supplies that can serve 20 people for three days.



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Boxes reused as a train at Highland Public Library

HIGHLAND CONTINUED

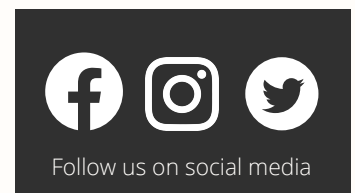
They increased the amount of recycling receptacles used in the building and posted signs in the bathrooms to encourage the use of hand dryers. The staff have incorporated discarded library materials into their programming. Books and CD's are reused in craft projects and cardboard boxes were upcycled into a kid-sized train in the children's department. The library also installed a water bottle filling station which has eliminated the use of thousands of plastic water bottles. A bike repair station was installed to encourage patrons and community members to ride bikes to the library. The library also joined the Clynk bottle and can recycling program. As part of this program, the library collects cans and bottles from the community and the proceeds from the deposit returns go to the library.

The Highland Public Library staff were overwhelmingly supportive of the SLCP and made changes to their own habits such as using reusable Keurig coffee pods and reusable cups, plates, and utensils.

For the social equity and financial sustainability benchmark categories, the Highland Public Library once again was guided by the direct feedback they received from their community conversations and surveys. Talking with their community members, they were able to better serve them through the library and also gained a better understanding of the vision that community members have for an improved community. With that knowledge, the library can now work with other local organizations to help achieve these goals. Having these discussions originating from the library helped many residents change their perceptions of the role that the library plays. This process helped place the library in a more central and vital role in the eyes of many residents.

Engaging with their community for the Collective Impact category, they strengthened their relationships with local businesses and community organizations. These partnerships created new pathways for library patrons to engage with businesses, heightened visibility for the businesses, and also led to the businesses thinking about new ways to help the libraries. One partnership, with Field Goods, established the library as a pick-up point for orders of produce from local farms. This helped to promote many local businesses and also gave residents easy, convenient access to fresh local grown produce.

Highland Public Library participates in many community wide events, offers voter registration, holds office hours with their State Assembly member, and displays census and voting information. Reflecting on the work done in the Social Cohesion category of the benchmarks, Highland Public Library Director, Julie Kelsall-Dempsey stated, "through revising and assessing our programs, services, and collection, we believe our primary values continue to affirm, support, and validate that all community members feel acknowledged and represented at the library." By increasing their efforts to make sure that all community members see themselves represented in the library, they have seen their circulation, registrations, and donations increase.



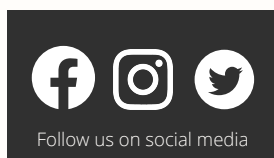


COMSEWOGUE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Comsewogue Public Library is located in Suffolk County, New York and is a member of the Suffolk Cooperative Library System. They satisfied the environmental benchmarks through obtaining certification from the Green Business Partnership in September 2020. They have now completed their SLI Custom Benchmarks and are currently finishing up the last of their revisions in order to be certified by the Sustainable Libraries Initiative. Their certification submission includes a wide range of efforts by the staff to reduce their greenhouse gas consumption, reduce their waste, strengthen their community partnerships, and demonstrate to their community that decision making based on the triple bottom line principles can have lasting and tangible benefits.

Their efforts toward reducing energy use include the installation of new HVAC units, a white roof, new EnergyStar rated boiler and hot water heater. Also key to this effort is their conversion to LED lighting, posting signs to remind staff (and patrons) to turn off lights when rooms are not occupied, and use of occupancy sensors to automatically turn lights on and off.

In 2019 the library participated in a Project Drawdown 21 Day Challenge focusing on carbon reduction. Their participation increased awareness among staff and in their community about the importance of acting to reduce our carbon footprint. Their combined efforts saved 6,713 pounds of CO2 and resulted in placing fifth in New York State and finishing in the top spot for libraries worldwide.



Comsewogue Public Library Project Drawdown Challenge

COMSEWOGUE CONTINUED

Throughout this process, they continued to inform their community about what efforts they were making and sharing resources. They invited their energy provider to visit and inform their patrons about energy savings. When the town stopped collecting glass as part of their curbside recycling program, the library worked with the town to place glass collection bins on their property so that interested residents could continue to recycle. They hold programs that offer e-Waste recycling and paper shredding. Additional items are recycled or reused including Halloween costumes, paper products used for craft programs, Ellison Die Cuts, prom dresses, batteries, toner cartridges, and bubble wrap. The library has a bottle filling station that has already saved over 10,000 single use plastic water bottles from being used.

To assist the library in reducing their water usage, they contacted the Suffolk County Water Authority. Water conservation tips and information were posted on the Green Team Bulletin board so that it is visible to all staff members. Going forward, they aim to reduce their greenhouse gas usage by 10% and reduce waste by 5%. Continued on page 6.



Community glass recycling at Comsewogue Public Library

COMSEWOGUE CONTINUED

The goal of including their community in the process of obtaining their Sustainable Libraries Initiative Certification continued through the social equity and financial sustainability categories of the program. The library benefited from finding and maintaining partnerships with other organizations in their community. Working together on shared projects made the planning and implementation easier by sharing the work among agencies. The staff at Comsewogue observed that libraries are well positioned to observe the needs of the community, even if they are not able to directly solve them. They were able to leverage this insight to align services and forge new partnerships to meet the emerging needs of their community.

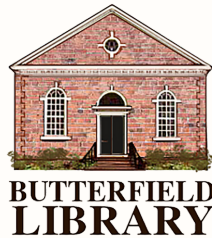
The generosity of Comsewogue Public Library's community leads to success in engaging patrons to help each other with donation drives such as toiletry drives to help veterans, school supplies for local elementary schools, Toys for Tots, handmade baby blankets and hats for hospitals, feminine products, hats and gloves. They offer services such as voter registration drives, a social work intern in partnership with Stony Brook University, Job Fairs, and a Senior Advocate. There are many program offerings that celebrate the diversity of their community such as bilingual story times, folklore fun, and Lao cuisine. There are also programs that focus on social justice themes including book discussion groups and a program about slavery on Long Island, sharing first person narratives by people who were enslaved. They have designated a staff member to continually monitor the library collection's diversity and will continue to fill in any gaps that are identified.

These three libraries have all forged their own unique paths through the certification process. We continue to be amazed by the innovative ways that our member libraries find to educate their communities and expand their partnerships with local businesses and organizations. The effect of each small change that is made to reduce energy, reduce waste, strive for equity, and make sound financial decisions ripples out to each of our communities and builds with every library that starts on this path.

MEMBER NEWS

Welcome to our newest SLCP Public Library, Butterfield Memorial Library! They are located in Cold Spring, NY and part of the Mid-Hudson Library System.

We also welcome two new School Librarians to our program, Ann-Marie Kalin from Suffolk County and On Kyung Joo from Nassau County.



UPCOMING EVENTS

SLCP Online Meetup

Thursday, December 2nd, 11:00 am EST

School Librarian Meetup

Tuesday, December 7th, 3:30pm EST

Webinar: Community Gardening at Your Library

Monday, December 13th, 11am EST

ALA LibLearnX Virtual Conference

January 21-24th, TBA

ALA Core Webinar: Sustainable Thinking Builds Strong Libraries and Resilient Communities

Tuesday, March 15th, 2pm EST

CALL FOR ITEMS

Have you created a library policy or program with Sustainability in mind? Share your ideas with our community! Contact sliadmin@suffolknet.org to be featured in our newsletter or on the SLI Website.

Don't miss our important news: Please add sli-newsletter@lists.suffolknet.org to your address book to keep our newsletter out of your junk or spam folders!



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