

For Immediate Release
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South Huntington Public Library is Certified Sustainable

The Sustainable Libraries Initiative recognizes the South Huntington Public Library as a leader in sustainability.



Suffolk County, New York - December 10th, 2021 - [South Huntington Public Library](#) in South Huntington, New York, has been certified as a “Sustainable Library” through the [Sustainable Libraries Initiative’s](#) award-winning Sustainable Libraries Certification Program. This ground-breaking initiative guides libraries through a step by step process to infuse [triple bottom line](#) sustainable decision-making into their library’s policies and actions.

Participation in the Sustainable Libraries Certification Program has brought about meaningful changes in the way South Huntington Public Library operates and interacts with their community. This process has steered staff toward being more intentional about reflecting the library's values of connection, awareness, respect, and empathy in their actions toward each other and the community.

They have increased their recycling efforts, converted to LED lighting, and hosted e-waste recycling events for their community. They installed a [Learning Garden](#) consisting of four raised beds where vegetables and herbs are grown. The garden is used in educational programming for children and the harvests are donated to local food pantries. Additionally, they instituted a comprehensive Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy that emphasizes the library’s commitment to supporting all members of their diverse community. This has led to increased and more responsive outreach to their Spanish-speaking community with English as a New Language (ENL) classes, ENL Conversation Cafés, and the ability to schedule appointments with a full-time bilingual staff member.

Learning more about sustainability and the impact of the triple bottom line decision-making drew South Huntington Public Library Director, Janet Scherer, to the Sustainable Libraries Certification Program. “I recognized early on how necessary the tenets of social equity are when interacting and forming relationships with our community’s families.” Engaging the staff in the process of completing the Sustainable Libraries Certification Program Benchmarks brought out collaboration between departments and inspired changes to how the library operates and even in their own personal habits. The library staff educated themselves on the environmental, social, and financial aspects of sustainability. The operations of the library and outward relationships with the community evolved and improved as a result.

International Impact

South Huntington Public Library is among the first libraries to participate in the Sustainable Libraries Certification Program, the first of its kind in the world. This benchmarking program was developed to assist libraries of all kinds - public, academic, and individual school librarians - to create opportunities to make better choices on behalf of the local and global community.

The program has been recognized by the International Federation of Library Associations at their 2019 World Congress in Athens, Greece, becoming the first program in the United States to be honored through their “Green Libraries” Award.

Comprehensive Approach

With categories of actions focusing on each of the three pillars of triple bottom line sustainability such as Energy, Indoor Spaces, Social Cohesion, and Resilience Planning, this comprehensive process leads a library toward institutional change that shifts the rationale for every decision to consider the local and global impacts. Through this program, libraries work with their communities to listen and learn, allowing local needs to be identified and addressed. Strengthening the relationship between the library and the community they serve builds resilience through stronger connections with many organizations and increased access to information.

The path to certification through the Sustainable Libraries Certification Program is designed to be flexible for libraries of different types, sizes, and budgets and guided by the communities they serve. Each library that completes the program will select the benchmarks that best fit the needs of their library and

community, resulting in a uniquely sustainable organization. Find out more information through our website (<https://sustainablelibrariesinitiative.org>) or contact sliadmin@suffolknet.org.

The Sustainable Libraries Initiative is expanding to enroll libraries throughout the United States, with nearly fifty libraries currently enrolled in the Sustainable Libraries Certification Program. South Huntington Public Library is the seventh library to be certified through this program.

For more information, please contact:

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