

01



## Responding to a Community in Need



my  
place2  
grow.

dream.

create.

It is difficult to look back at 2009 without recognizing the impact of the economic downturn. Many Clevelanders, and particularly those who live in the neighborhoods served by the 29 branches of Cleveland Public Library, bore more than their share of financial hardship. Slavic Village, for example, which is served by our Fleet Branch, received national headlines as the epicenter of the foreclosure crisis.

As a result, people turned to Cleveland Public Library for more services and support. The library system saw a 17 percent jump in use of services. Those services most in demand included computer training (classes as well as one-on-one instruction), GED classes and after-school tutoring.

Despite its own budget challenges, Cleveland Public Library kept its doors open. With the exception of some minor schedule changes that affected only those times when Library usage has historically been low, all branches remained open to maintain a walking-distance presence in local neighborhoods where many people cannot afford cars or RTA passes. As the budget allowed, the Library added computers throughout the system for public use. All branches were wired to offer wireless services in response to increased need from local residents who had computers but who could no longer afford to pay for Internet access in their homes.

The Library continued to allocate the same percentage of its budget for materials and all key programs continued, as scheduled. The Library also acquired 400,000 new materials to keep its circulation fresh and relevant. These additions outnumbered what some suburban libraries have in their total collections. With budget cuts taking an especially heavy toll on smaller libraries, Cleveland Public Library also saw a huge jump in the number of materials transferred to other libraries through its affiliation with the regional CLEVNET consortium of libraries.

Not only did the Library provide the necessary books, materials and technologies, but it also responded to community needs in other ways. In 2009, the Library partnered for the second year with the Children's Hunger Alliance to help provide free summer lunches for the thousands of children who participate in Summer Reading Clubs. While in its second year, this was the first time that all local Library branches participated.

In addition, the Library served as a resource for dozens of other area nonprofit organizations that relied on neighborhood branches for space to host educational meetings and community discussions.



CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY