



MILLIS PUBLIC LIBRARY

FOCUS GROUPS SUMMARY REPORT 2024

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS = 20

- **Focus Group #1** (1/30/25 1:00-2:30 pm) = 8
- **Focus Group #2** (1/30/25 6:00-7:30 pm) = 8
- **Focus Group #3** (2/11/25 1:00-2:30 pm) = 4

1. WHAT ARE THE FIRST THREE WORDS YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU THINK OF THE MILLIS PUBLIC LIBRARY?

- Accessible (2)
- Accommodating
- Available
- Books (6)
- Comfortable (2)
- Community (2)
- Community Meeting Space
- Community Reads
- Convenient
- Cozy
- Discount Tickets
- Easy to Use App
- Education
- Entertainment
- Friendly (8)
- Great Place
- Great Selection
- Helpful (4)
- Interlibrary Loan
- Inviting
- Kim (Director)
- Layout is Very Good
- Learning Space
- Mom Get Together
- Multi-Generational
- Playspace



- Preschool Playspace
- Resources
- Sanctuary
- Solar Panels
- Space
- Stimulating
- Useful
- Very Necessary Resource
- Welcoming
- Well-Stocked

2. WHAT DO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY LIKE THE MOST/LEAST ABOUT THE PROGRAMS THE LIBRARY HAS OFFERED?

PROGRAM ATTENDANCE: Attendees: 14 || Attend at Least Monthly: 4

PREFERRED PROGRAM FORMATS:

In Person: 17 || **Live Stream:** 17 || **Recorded/On Demand:** 16

NOTE: Most prefer to attend programs in multiple formats.

FAVORITE PROGRAMS (25):

- Book Sale (4)
- Barbie Galentine's Day "sleep under" (2)
- Copley Cats (2)
- Art Classes by "Art Hub" (I think Pop Up Art)
- Author Presentations (Native American Land)
- Author Visits
- Book Groups (Clicquot and virtual)
- Concerts (Rob Zammarchi, classical to pop)
- Knitting Group
- Microgreens
- Middle School Programs (anime, tarot)
- Preschool Programs
- Royal Wedding Program
- Songs & Stories
- Speakers or Entertainment (Copley Cats, omelet making)
- Storytime (when kids were younger)
- Taylor Swift-Themed Programs
- Winter Clothes Exchange
- Outside Presenters for Adults
- Ted Reinstein

PROGRAMS THAT DIDN'T MEET EXPECTATIONS (2):

- Movies are sometimes rated R. I don't want to attend them.
- Sometimes, the performer isn't up to expectations (e.g., an author was full of himself).

PROGRAMS TO OFFER MORE FREQUENTLY (9):

- Crafts for Adults (2)
- Author Events
- Bible Studies
- Book Discussion Groups in Different Genres (mystery, historical fiction)
- Concerts
- Movie Programs
- Novel Occasion (more than once a year)
- Tangerini's Tour and similar kinds of programs (out in the town)

ADJUST PROGRAM SCHEDULE (5):

- Book Groups/Clubs in the evenings to accommodate working people. (3)
- I want more adult programs in the evenings.

ADJUST PROGRAM SCHEDULE (cont.):

- My husband and I work. We want to attend more children's programs, but we wish there were more on the weekend. We really want to go to toddler water play.
- Songs & Stories on weekdays are difficult for working parents, and 10:30 am on Saturday doesn't always work. Most other libraries offer programs at the same time.
- Storytime runs into naptime.

MARKETING IDEA (1): Improve the newsletter by 1) focusing on children's events and 2) improving/clarifying program descriptions (5)

COMMENTS/FEEDBACK (3):

- I love the book sale. Great prices and variety.
- Kids/Teen programs are great.
- There are a lot of great programs for children, but I'm an older adult, so I don't attend.

3. HOW CAN THE LIBRARY'S PHYSICAL SPACE BE IMPROVED? WHAT CAN WE DO TO MAKE THE FACILITY MORE WELCOMING, USEFUL, AND USER-FRIENDLY?

INTERIOR IMPROVEMENT IDEAS (20):

- **Enhance Young Adults Space (4):**
 - Expand Young Adults Space (3): Offer a larger space to accommodate more kids, especially on half-days.
 - Improve the separation between the young adult and children's spaces.
- **Create a Beverage Area (3):** "Café" area with a coffee maker || Keurig (have at Dover) || Keurig and tea area
- **Add a Makers Space (2)**
- **Improve Community Room (2):** Add rug or wall-to-wall carpeting in the Community Room. It would make it more inviting and improve acoustics. || More comfortable seating in the Community Room.
- **Make BookPage More Visible (2)**
- **Upgrade Children's Space (2):** Put coloring and other self-directed activities on the table. || Increase space in the toy area.
- **Misc. Unique Interior Improvement Ideas (5):** Display young kids' art, not just school-age children's. || Expand the book sale section || Offer a Music lab with space and equipment for creating music. || Remove the barriers at the desk. || Take out the fireplace (waste of space).

EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENT IDEAS (3):

- **Outdoor Covered Area (2)**
- **Misc. Exterior Improvement Idea (1):** Add more tables for more room for sitting.

UNRELATED IDEAS (3):

- Sanitize the kids' toys and hard surfaces as much as possible. (2)
- Add more books. Fill the shelves. There's too much empty space.

ACCESSIBILITY INPUT:

- **MPL is Accessible (5):** Aisles are wide enough. | | Stroller accessible. | | Very well designed. Good layout. | | Yes, it is generally accessible.
- It was suggested that MPL solicit more feedback from community members with accessibility needs and expertise to better assess the Library's status.

COMMENTS/FEEDBACK (4):

- Young Adult space can get noisy. (2)
- Bathrooms are clean.
- Like the look of new teen furniture.

4. ARE THERE ANY BARRIERS TO SERVICE—THINGS THAT IMPEDE YOUR ABILITY TO RECEIVE THE SERVICE YOU NEED OR WANT FROM THE LIBRARY?

COLLECTIONS IDEAS (2):

- Need a more robust nonfiction section.
- Staff should be able to let people know how long the wait will be for holds.

MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS IDEAS (3): Expand Hours (3): Offer more weekend hours. | | Stay open until 4 pm on Saturdays. | | Open on Saturdays in the summer.

MARKETING IDEA (1): Improve the website navigation. You have to “dig” for some of MPL's website information. It isn't presented in the site's menus.

PROGRAMS IDEAS (2):

- Offer more toddler programs after 5 pm or on the weekends.
- Provide kids' home school activities.

SERVICES IDEAS (1): Provide a copier rather than a desktop machine.

TECHNOLOGY IDEAS (3):

- Increase the maximum number of books that can be borrowed via Hoopla. (2)
- Provide clear instructions regarding how to access the Digital library. It's confusing to find what is available in the Library. There are lots of different places to search.
- Offer a tutorial for using Libby and other MPL digital resources. It can be via video, in person, with FAQs, etc.

COMMENTS/FEEDBACK (10):

- **Library Hours (3):** I like the addition of Friday night hours. | | I love that it is open until 8 pm. | | No complaints with hours
- Likes that there is a notary. (2)
- Approximately 70% of participants have recently visited MPL's website.
- MPL provides great service for external book clubs (reserving copies).
- Never have a problem finding books or placing holds; the holds come in quickly.
- Sometimes, the wait for books is long. It can be hard with book clubs.
- Staff is always available to help.

5. LET'S TALK ABOUT THE LIBRARY'S ONLINE PRESENCE (WEBSITE, FACEBOOK, ETC.). HOW AND WHY DO YOU USE THESE RESOURCES?

WEBSITE:

- **Website Visitors: 20**
 - **Frequency: Weekly: 11 | | At Least Monthly: 9**
- **Reasons to Visit (10):**
 - Events/Programs Info (6)
 - Requesting a Book (2)
 - Check out the Library of Things
 - Reserve Museum Passes
- **Ideas (7):**
 - Library of Things information should be on the website. (2)
 - Would like a class on using different resources on the website. (2)
 - She is intimidated by the website. Would like training/tips.
 - Add more program information and make it easier to find.
 - Make it easier to access and review the Library of Things (it's hard to navigate).
- **Comments/Feedback (11):**
 - Don't know what online resources are on the website. (2)
 - Calendar is extensive.
 - Can't always tell if a hold went through.
 - Have only used the catalog
 - It's serviceable.
 - I had an issue accessing the events page but got used to it.
 - Likes the new card catalog.
 - Never had a problem with the website.
 - The website's catalog update was hard to navigate. Esther helped her work through it, but it wasn't intuitive.
 - The website is attractive.

FACEBOOK:

- **Facebook Page Visitors:** 7
- **Reason to Visit (1):** Something pops up on her Facebook feed, so she clicks through to MPL's Facebook page for more information.
- **Ideas (3):**
 - Post more information about books in general and more about events.
 - Share more pictures from events. It creates a positive feeling about the Library.
 - Sometimes, the Library is slow to post event information. You need to give people more notice/time to react.
- **Comment/Feedback:** Uses Facebook page to see what events MPL is offering.

MARKETING IDEAS (3):

- COA/School newsletters
- Millis Medway News: I haven't seen information about the Library's offerings there.
- Put a sandwich board on Main Street. Somewhere outside and visible.

COMMENTS/FEEDBACK (3):

- I use the phone app. That's a good place to find everything.
- To access MPL info, I use the website and the physical bulletin board.
- Where is the central place for information? It seems like everything is fragmented in multiple places.

6. WHICH LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES OR SERVICES DO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY USE, EITHER ON-SITE OR VIA THE LIBRARY'S WEBSITE?

DIGITAL RESOURCES/SERVICES USED:

- **Apps/Streaming Services:** Libby: 10 || Hoopla: 7 || Kanopy: 2 || Freegal: 1
- Has done training with Library staff at the Senior Center.
- Occasionally, I need access to a printer.
- Received some technology training from Esther.
- Used a desktop computer.

TECHNOLOGY IDEAS (12):

- **Offer Technology Classes (6):** Artificial Intelligence Classes (What is AI? What's its practical use?). (2) || Coding classes for girls happen at the library, but I haven't seen anything for adults. I'd like to see coding lessons for adults. (2) || Digital privacy topics || Monthly Lunch and Learn Workshops that cover a different topic or resource each session
- **Provide Device Training (2):** Add instructions on how to use technology devices that can be checked out in the Library of Things (e.g., sewing machine instructions). || Offer one-on-one training with personal devices.
- **Increase Awareness of Tech Offerings (2):** Educate the community on the Library's technology resources and services. || Makerspaces offer devices like Cricut machines

and VHS-to-DVD converters. It would be helpful if MPL provided information on these types of services and devices offered at nearby libraries.

- Lend out a VHS converter.
- Millis Public Schools used to have the “brain pops” learning platform. Could the Library fund that?

PROGRAM IDEAS (8):

- **More Book Clubs (4):** There’s a book club that discusses books that are newly out, but I’d like to see an actual monthly book club to discuss a book that everyone has read. (2)
|| Family book club || Parenting book club
- Conduct foreign Language classes that enable you to practice speaking the language with a group.
- Cultural presentations. Sherborn Library has people from other places speak to the group (e.g., a Korean person taught a class on how to make a Korean lamp).
- Host Travel Talks (planning trips, sharing information about trips, travel resources)
- Music basics workshops with 1-2 classes (piano, guitar, ukelele).

COMMENT/FEEDBACK (1): I haven’t heard of Hoopla

7. WHAT ISSUES ARE NOW FACING THE TOWN THAT YOU THINK MAY IMPACT THE LIBRARY OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?

- **Fundraising Support Challenges (4):** Experiencing funding challenges as a town || Fundraising || The Town doesn’t fund the Library’s programs and occasional small capital projects; the Friends of the Millis Public Library does (the Friends replaced the furniture in the teen room). We must ensure the Friends’ fundraising efforts stay strong. || We need to make people more aware of what the Friends do so they want to give money
- **Economic Issues (3):** Educate community members on state-level funding challenges || MPL must spend its money responsibly. Potential new initiatives should be evaluated to see if we can keep up with them financially. || What will the economic climate be?
- **Growth of Senior Population (2):** More caregivers taking care of elderly parents. || More seniors need services, like low vision resources (sign language and braille programs).
- **Need for Welcoming, Safe Spaces (2):** Make sure MPL remains open and welcoming to everyone (inclusivity). || The Library should remain a safe and inclusive environment in the current political climate. MPL should be transparent about issues it is facing.
- **Misc. (4):** Book Banning: The Library should make the community aware of book-banning activities. Reach out for support. || Friends of MPL’s needs to grow its membership. || Prepare for future pandemics. || Provide neutral/non-partisan education regarding state-level legislation.

MISC. IDEA (1): Determine how the Library can support/supplement the school library during construction at Middle/High School

COMMENT/FEEDBACK (1): Concern was expressed regarding what middle/high school students are being exposed to (tarot/palm reading). Stated that a drag queen storytime is not appropriate for young kids.

8. WHAT COULD THE LIBRARY DO TO SERVE THE MILLIS COMMUNITY BETTER? WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE?

COLLECTIONS IDEAS (2): Have the newest books come in faster. || Have more educational kids' toys, such as alphabet recognition, numbers, STEM-focused items, etc.

FACILITY IDEAS (4): Put on monthly art exhibits. (3) || Add display space for collections.

MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS IDEAS (6): Conduct a middle school focus group. || Connect with other town departments/committees and groups (outreach). || Extend borrowing for new releases to 14 days. || Increase awareness of the Friends of MPL's mission and what the group does. || Offer a suggestion box. || Pursue additional staffing and related funding.

MARKETING IDEAS (1): Incorporate an art gallery on the website of children's art.

PROGRAM IDEAS (13):

- **Programs Schedule (2):** More adult programs during the day. || Offer evening programs on history.
- **Misc. Unique Ideas (11):** BINGO made people seek out topics they might not usually read (2) || Stem Programs for small children as well as middle and high school (2) || Author talks || Cookbook Club: Everyone makes a recipe from a selected cookbook. Then, have a potluck to share the food. || Different types of lectures (history). || Local history programs || More adult programs in all different areas of interest (e.g., spend an evening learning something new, especially new cooking traditions). || Program on aviation, sports, walking in nature, photography, hobbies || Programs that can bring people together who share the same hobbies.

ASPIRATIONS FOR THE LIBRARY (2):

- The Library attracts teens. Teens want to go to the Library.
- The services we provide are over and beyond what other libraries offer.

COMMENTS/FEEDBACK (2):

- Love that we don't charge late fees. Don't change that! (2)
- I love the library. There's something there for everyone. The staff is a joy to talk to, and nothing is banned. There are little kids running around. You don't have to be quiet.