

We often underestimate the importance of libraries. To us, the library is no more than a place where we get our books. But in reality, it is much more than that. It's a public place where people can access computers, books, and other entertainment materials. It is a place where the community can gather at and the youth can learn from. Libraries have always been valuable to the community as it was in the 1960s and also our future generations.

Published on the newspaper on April 13, 1967, the Woodbridge Library System had been modified the day before into an area reference center. This was valuable to the community because it became one of the strongest branches of libraries in New Jersey. They received a 10,000 grant to enhance the library environment like getting more adult non-fiction books. Then on July 1, 1968 they will receive a 26,000 dollar grant for more improvements. The library development was very important to the community. It enabled people to get their recourses and more and more people were now getting involved in the library experience.

With the progress they were making, they were hoping for a 60,000 dollar grant from the State Aid in a few years. Mr. Beckerman stated, "We only had 20 percent of what we should have. Now we are running 80 to 90 percent of what we should have." This shows the increasing development of the library system stating from 1967. Iselin Library started in 1964 and gained more recourse in 1967 after the grants were given. This attracted more visitors, especially adults with the additional non-fiction books added, and kids with the children books there. It had become a reference center where the community would depend on, implying that libraries are truly important to the community. Libraries at that time were also being developed to becoming research centers (which many are today) and the amount of recourses will increase

too. These libraries were in their developing stage, the reason why this is valuable to the community; they showed they deserve the money for their recourses to be given out to the public. In 1963, libraries were only receiving a grant from the State Aid of 1,200 dollars, but now, Woodbridge Library was projected to receive 66,000 dollars from the State Aid yearly, more likely to increase as the years go on since the development of the library is increasing. These were one of the main reasons why libraries were valuable to the community, they were back then and they will continue to do so.

Another reason why libraries were important back then were the entertainment they provided to the public, especially children. Published on the newspaper on August 27, 1969, the mayor reported that "no one outgrows the need of public libraries." He was puzzled by this because he even said that the Woodbridge Public Library System is "one of the best systems in the state." Then they gave the upcoming schedule for the next few days which was outstanding how much the Woodbridge Public Library System offers to the public. August 28-29 was especially for adults. On August 28 was movie night for school age boys and girls at 8 P.M. IN Fords Library, they had a "4 o' clock story hour" which was on August 29. And in Colonia Library, they had a "credits and story hour" which began at 2 P.M on August 29. And did I mention that all of this is for FREE.

The mayor was truly proud of our library system, which he had great pride in. Augustine Birrel once stated about the libraries,"Libraries are not made, they grow." Well that is true in fact. Most of us, as said before, underestimate the power of our libraries. Most of us don't consider it as a daily thing, but you can consider a library to be a heart of the community since

it provides us with the knowledge and entertainment the community needs. Back in the 1960s, most schools depended on the library, and might as well say so did the community. As it was being developed into a research center back into the 1970s, people commonly considered the library as what we consider a movie theatre now, only that the library provides us more knowledge, and I'll admit more fun.

But with all this popularity, renovation had to increase. They had to try to work out a lease deal for more cinder block which they can use for more shelves; they are all doing this for the community which I found very valuable. They need as much storage space as they possibly can get as library population continuously grows. But everything was all under control because the library director Edward P. Beckerman managed everything fluently.

Libraries. Now you understand that they are very important as they were before in the past. Our society today is trying to forget that libraries even exist! But there is no other place that will offer such great recourses like knowledge to the public than any other place. And most important, this is free! But in reality, everyone uses the library. They use it to get their new book that just came out, they use it to print/photocopy stuff or use the computer since they don't have one, and they use the library to even hold gatherings with a project group because of the quiet environment. Our society is trying to cover up libraries with movie theatres or other places, but truly nothing can take a libraries place! Just like nothing can replace the heart of a human body. And as for the newspaper author said, "I am proud of our libraries and I bet you are, too."

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