

## Spaulding Memorial Library Expansion Campaign

Sebago, Maine

One hundred years ago, Sebago's first and only public library was built on a dirt road in a small rural town with a population less than 500. Today, that dirt road is a busy state route carrying commuters to Portland, and the year-round population has quadrupled, to almost 2000. It is growing steadily. In summertime, when the cottages and camps along Sebago Lake fill with part-time residents, the population is closer to 7500, with many of these additional people among our heaviest users and strongest supporters. The existing library building is no longer able to serve our community's increasing needs.

Spaulding Memorial Library has less than 1000 feet of useable space. The collection is overflowing, bookshelves obscure the windows, many children's books are shelved above a child's reach, and the rolling shelves are so close that browsing the collection is claustrophobic. The DVD collection is perched above the coat rack. We have a handicap ramp for access, but wheelchairs cannot fit between the rolling bookcases, and seated patrons can't reach the top shelves.

The library is one open room with no private space for meetings, tutoring or events. Children's Story Hour is read aloud to everyone in the building. The various civic and social service groups who use the library for meetings have to arrange them outside of regular library hours if they want any privacy. Separate space for seniors, teens and tweens simply doesn't exist, and their needs are largely unmet.

Despite the cramped quarters, demand for library services is growing. Over this last year alone, we saw a 15% increase in overall attendance, and patrons requested 32% more kinds of library use. These numbers will grow. Today's libraries are



expected to do so much more than lend books. They are "third places," a neutral space where people can connect, learn and participate in a wide range of activities. Our residents need a warm, welcoming environment that fosters social interaction and community spirit.

We believe that all these community needs could be filled if we expanded the library building. The purpose of this capital campaign is to raise the money to build a new wing on the side of the original library. We have ample space abutting the current building for a significant addition and off-street parking. The new wing would have both a small meeting room and a large community meeting space, which currently exists nowhere else in town. Children and teens would have separate, dedicated areas, creating better space for our children from the elementary school directly across the road. Community groups, such as the Lions Club, the Sebago Days Committee and the Sebago Community Market are all excited about a meeting space they could use outside of library hours. Our Recreation Department would use space for senior classes and activities. We could add some of the newer services that libraries now offer, such as loaning tools and appliances. Off-street parking would mean patrons no longer had to park on the busy state road.

The possibilities are endless, but our current space is not. Please help us grow.