

# Martin Memorial Library

## York, Pennsylvania

Project Type: Downtown Public Library  
Size: 70,000 sf  
Completion: 2005  
Cost: \$8.2 million  
Owner: Martin Memorial Library Association  
Contact: Bill Schell, Executive Director  
(717) 846-5300 ext. 229

What do kids think is cool these days? That's a moving target. When York, Pennsylvania needed to expand its main downtown public library, they wanted more than just added space. They wanted to reinvent the library.

In designing the new library, we took cues from more than other libraries. We looked at shopping malls, restaurants, book retailers, and playgrounds. Our aim to increase circulation meant looking at the library from a new angle.

Libraries are not just for books – they're for people too, but how do you afford to make room for both? Careful analysis of circulation patterns showed that only 20% of the library's books were checked out on a regular basis. We needed to decide what to do with the other 80%. The renovated and expanded Martin Library boasts a large condensed book storage area in the lower level for less frequently circulated collections. This idea paved the way for improved merchandising of popular collections.

Circulating books means getting people into the library. The new library includes a café, a for-profit retail area, a teen center, and an animated story-book forest to excite even the youngest readers. Today's visitor can borrow a book, buy a book, take a gardening class, sip cappuccino, or attend a lecture. This is not your average library.

