

**Brooklyn Public Library testimony to the
Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations
Oversight Hearing—Six Day Service
November 30, 2015**

Good morning. My name is Linda Johnson and I am the president and CEO of Brooklyn Public Library. I would like to thank Speaker Mark-Viverito, Finance Chair Ferreras-Copeland, Majority Leader and Cultural Affairs and Libraries Chair Van Bramer, Libraries Subcommittee Chair King, and the entire City Council for their support of New York City's libraries.

We are grateful to the Council for allowing us several opportunities earlier this year to testify about the need for increased investment in Brooklyn Public Library. Clearly, you heard our voices, and those of the thousands of patrons who participated in the Invest in Libraries campaign.

On behalf of Brooklyn Public Library's staff and trustees, thank you for demonstrating—in both word and deed—your continued support of the city's 217 public libraries, and the millions of New Yorkers who rely on them.

It gives me great pleasure to report to you that we are carrying out our pledge to expand our hours, increase our programming and hire new staff to provide our patrons with the world-class library services they deserve. Universal six-day service has long been our foremost operating priority. Thanks to your support, working parents are now able to bring their children to the library on weekends, and busy professionals and students can access our resources in the evening.

In addition to providing systemwide six-day service, we have more than doubled the number of branches that are open every day: Macon Library in Bedford-Stuyvesant, New Lots Library in East New York, and Mapleton Library near Bensonhurst have joined Central and Kings Highway in offering seven-day service.

In total, 22 branches have added an extra day of service, including six branches that are now open on Sundays. Brooklyn Public Library is providing an additional 217 hours of service per week throughout the borough, with average branch hours of operation increasing from 45 to 49 per week.

As proud as we are of our expanded hours, we are even prouder of the people who are serving patrons in our branches. Today we are joined by several of the librarians and staff members we have been able to hire as a result of your investment in libraries. Would our new librarians and staff members please raise their hands?

The majority of the librarians we have hired to date are children's and youth librarians—and as I will share with you in a moment, they are already contributing to our early literacy and school preparedness programs. The newest members of our team are the best and brightest in their field: More than 120 people attended the job fairs that we held this summer within weeks of your decision to increase our funding. Since July 1, we have received hundreds of resumes.

Our new librarians include Ellen Weaver, whose passion for books was ignited by a teacher who introduced her to the world of Harry Potter. Ellen believes that two ingredients are required to make a lifelong reader: the right book, and a good mentor. Prior to Ellen's arrival at Macon Library, the branch was without a children's librarian and had the capacity to host only one children's program per week. Now, thanks to Ellen, the branch is hosting at least three programs per week for babies, preschoolers, and older students.

Kevin Liu is a former computer programmer who speaks fluent Mandarin, Cantonese and Hakka. He is enthusiastic about serving new Americans at Arlington Library in Cypress Hills because he is himself a proud immigrant to this country.

Christine Zarett worked in the fashion industry until her job vanished during the recession. Faced with adversity, Christine went back to school, and today she serves patrons at New Lots Library with the wisdom and empathy of someone who has known, and overcome, challenging times.

Elena Rivera-Cruz, our new children's librarian at Washington Irving in Bushwick, is already a known and trusted presence in her neighborhood's schools, where she has conducted bilingual outreach to children and educators. Elena is an extraordinary asset to a branch that serves our system's second-highest Spanish-speaking population.

The first phase of our hiring is now complete, and the second phase will commence in the coming weeks, as we evaluate our needs in light of our expanded hours of operation. In total, we intend to hire 90 new staff members—librarians, special officers, and custodial professionals—with the funds you have entrusted to us. This is in addition to the 26 people we hired with the additional funding we received from the City in fiscal year 2015.

Brooklynites continue to turn to their local libraries in record numbers to connect with their neighbors, access virtually all of humanity's accumulated knowledge, and pursue their dreams with help from our talented staff and volunteers.

2015 was another record-breaking year for attendance at BPL, and in the coming year we will serve more patrons than ever before with programs like Ready, Set, Kindergarten, an early literacy initiative that prepares future students to succeed in the classroom. With our new children's librarians in place, we have already been able to offer more Ready, Set, Kindergarten

classes in our branches, and we will enroll even more children now that our expanded weekend hours will allow more working families to participate.

Attendance at BPL programs for children ages 5 and younger is up more than 20% over last year, and nearly 50% over two years ago. This is a tribute to the hard work of our new staff members and a testament to the demand for library programs in the communities we serve. Ready, Set, Kindergarten is just one example of the programs we have been or will be able to expand thanks to your support. We expect that attendance at our programs will increase by more than 8% this year, to nearly 1 million patrons.

Preliminary data shows that we have already entertained more than 30,000 visits during our expanded hours since they began six weeks ago. Total visits to our branches are up more than 70,000 over this point last year.

These are people who will go on to start businesses, graduate from college, or contribute to the artistic and cultural life of the borough—thanks not only to the help they received at Brooklyn Public Library, but also to the leadership of the elected officials who invested in their futures.

And when these patrons visit our branches, they will have access to a more robust collection: as a result of your leadership, we will increase our collections budget by \$1.25 million over last year to add more books to our shelves and more materials to our electronic catalogue.

In the greatest city in the world, every family should be able to visit their nearest library on the weekend. Every Brooklynite who works or goes to school during the day should be able to visit our branches in the evening. The single most important thing libraries can do for their patrons is to be there when we say we will be there. And that is why the funds allowing us to provide expanded service this year must be baselined in the city's budget.

The 2016 budget reversed years of neglect that took a great toll on the institutions that serve more New Yorkers than our city's performing arts venues, museums, gardens, and zoos combined. As our strong supporters and advocates, you understand that the passage of the budget was not the end of a process, but the beginning of a conversation we look forward to having with you in the weeks and months ahead.

We've taken an important step together, and we have an extraordinary opportunity to build on our momentum in next year's budget. Let's seize that opportunity and make sure that this world-class city is home to world-class libraries.

Thank you for your support, and we look forward to our continued partnership.

INVEST IN LIBRARIES

INVEST IN NEW YORKERS!

FY16 Service Expansion

New York City Council
November 30, 2015

Linda E. Johnson, Brooklyn Public Library | Bridget Quinn-Carey, Queens Library | Iris Weinshall, The New York Public Library



INVESTINLIBRARIES.ORG

BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Increased Funding FY16

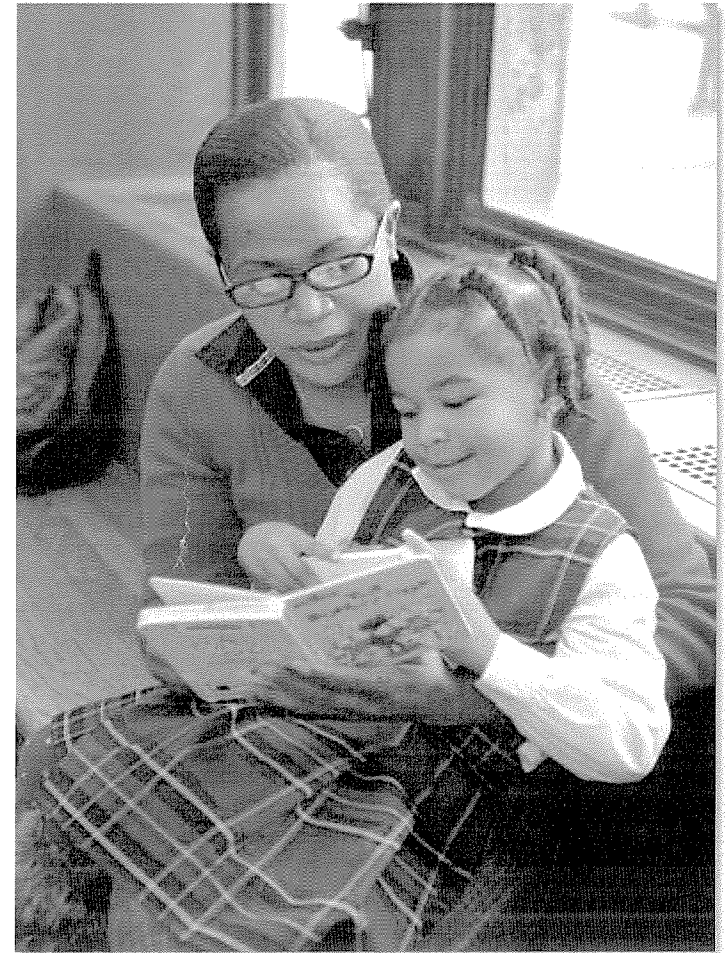
For 3 Library Systems:

Expense **+\$43 million**

For BPL:

Expense **+\$12 million**

- Held 3 highly attended job fairs
- Will hire 90 new staffers this year (half are already in place)
- 988 hours of training for new staff



BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Expanded Hours



**+217 hours
a week
across 60 locations**

**Extra day of
service
at 22 more branches,
including 6 Sundays**

Coney Island Library | BROOKLYN

BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

More Librarians



Arlington Library | BROOKLYN



Macon Library | BROOKLYN



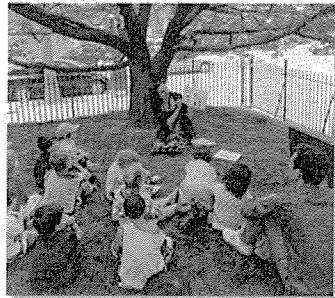
Washington Irving Library | BROOKLYN

BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

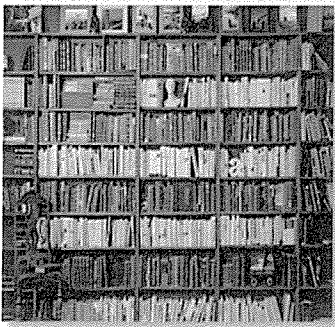
More Visitors, Programs and Materials



BPL has had **30,502** more visitors during new hours



Program attendance up, expected to jump 8% to 1 million



Increased new materials by \$1.25 million

QUEENS LIBRARY

Increased Funding FY16: \$12M for QBPL



\$9 million to hire staff
for 6-day service

+ more than 100
new employees

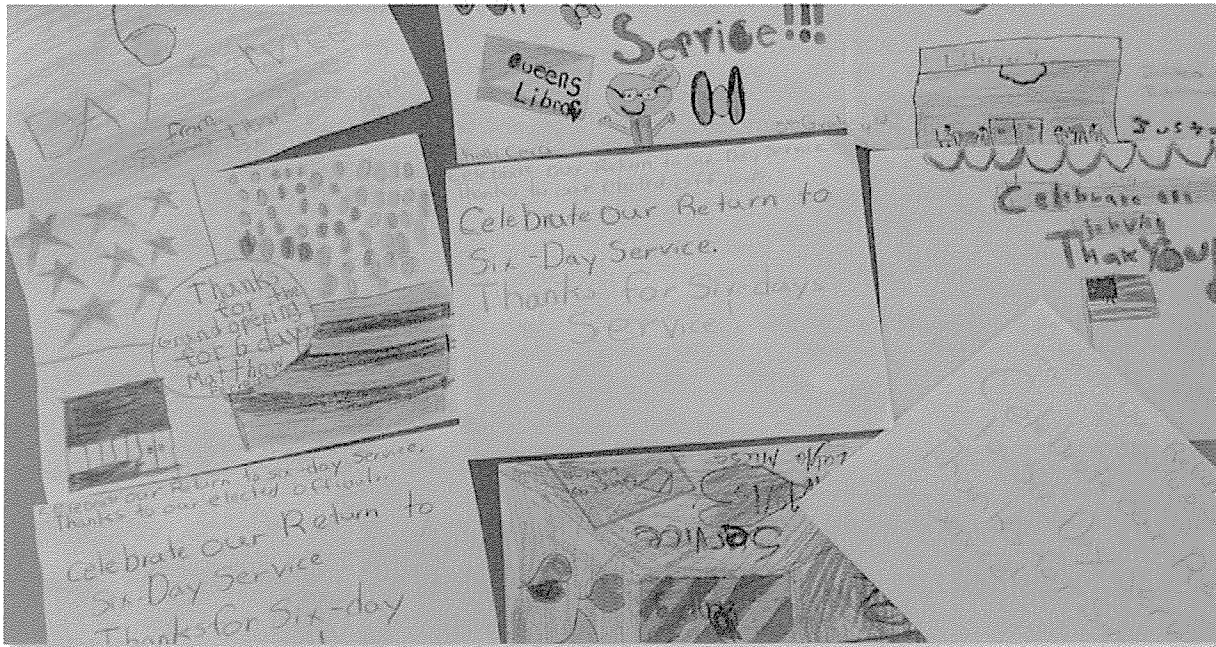
+\$2.6 million
for library materials

+.4 million for expanded
programs (ESOL, older
adult, early childhood, etc.)

Broadway Children's Room | QUEENS

QUEENS LIBRARY

Expanded Hours



Libraries open
45.6 hours

QUEENS LIBRARY

Additional Programming

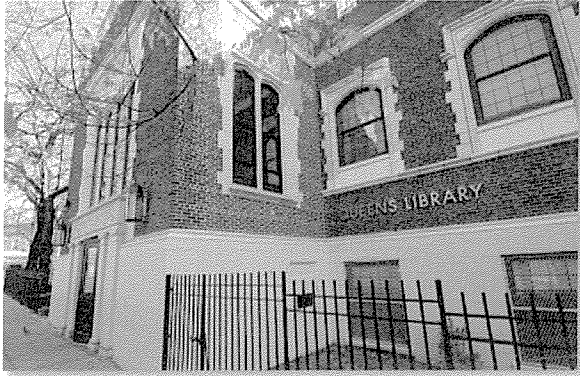


- Stacks program
- ESOL and pre-HSE
- Kickoff to Kindergarten

Woodhaven UPK Site | QUEENS

QUEENS LIBRARY

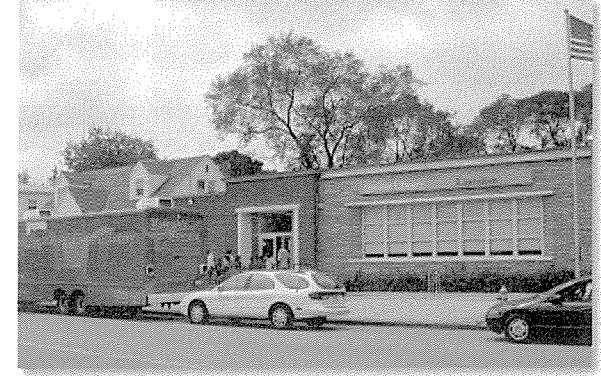
Increased Capital Funding



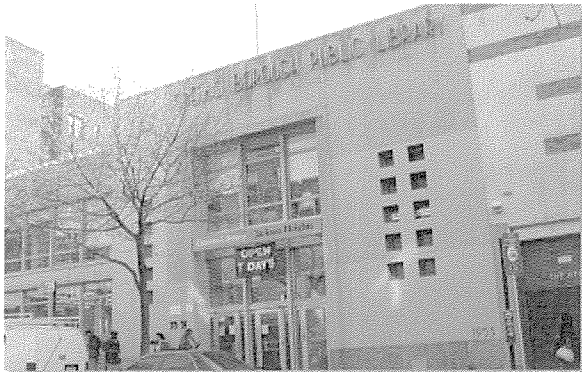
Queens Library at Ridgewood



Queens Library at Queensboro Hill



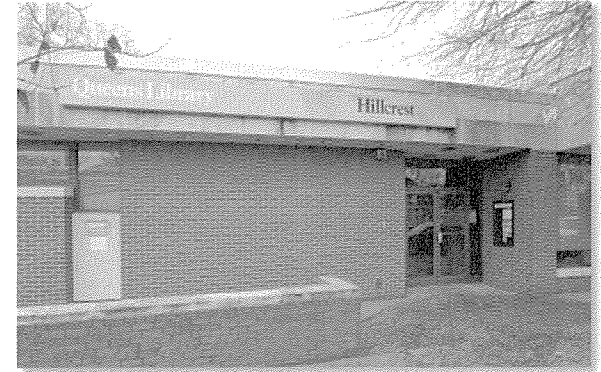
Queens Library at Laurelton



Queens Library at Jackson Heights



Queens Library at Richmond Hill



Queens Library at Hillcrest

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

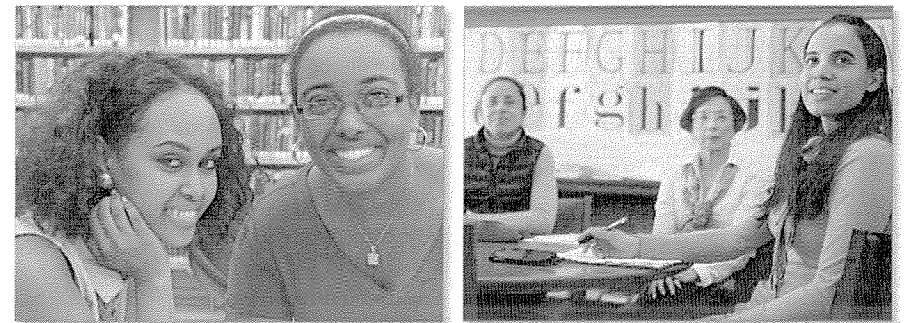
Increased Funding FY16

For 3 Systems:

Expense **+\$43 million**
Capital **+\$300 million**

For NYPL:

Expense **+\$19 million**
Capital **+\$100 million**



THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Expanded Hours



More weekly hours
50 on average, up from 46,
per branch

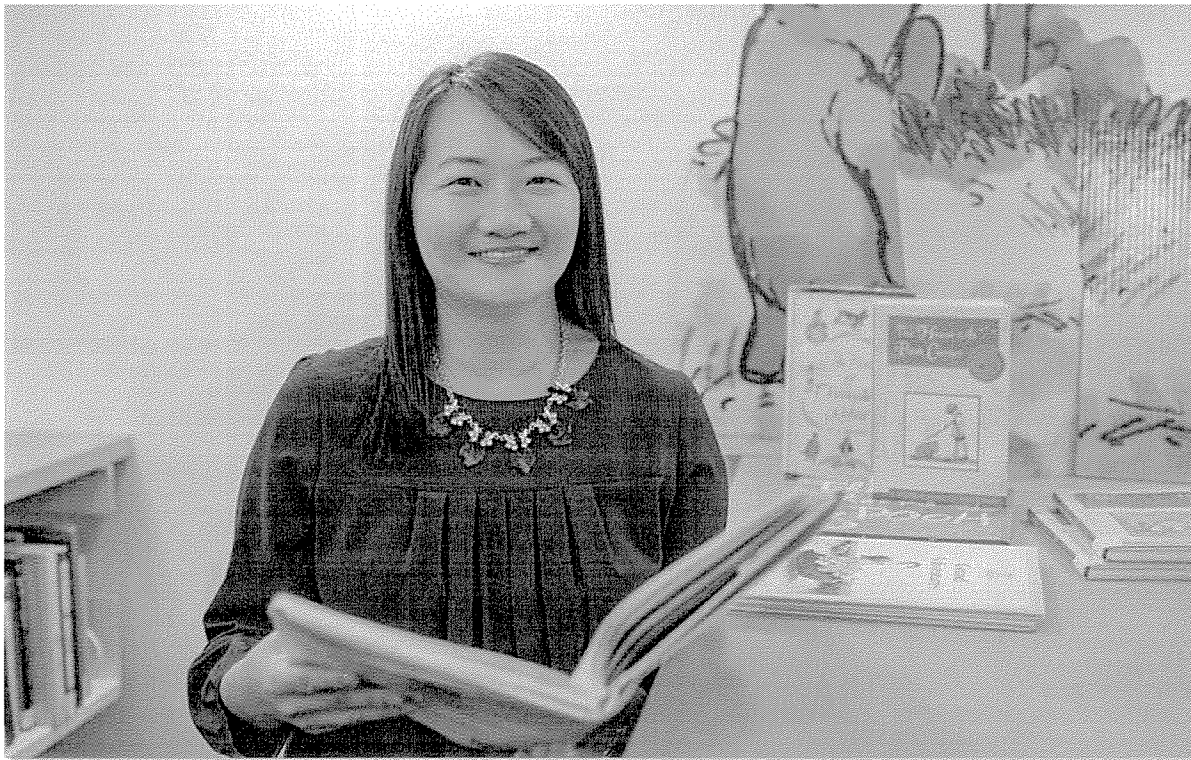
Sunday service
at 4 more branches

+289 hours a week
across 92 locations

Grand Concourse Library | BRONX

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

More Librarians & Staff



Seward Park Library | MANHATTAN

+45 children's librarians

+22 young adult librarians

+26 adult branch librarians

+14 facilities & security staff

+34 additional staff

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

More Programs & Books for Our Branches



+44,000 early literacy spots

+38% hands-on science workshops for kids and teens

\$750,000 for circulating books & e-books

Fort Washington Library | MANHATTAN

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Research Centers



+11 staff members

+ hours
at Schomburg & LPA

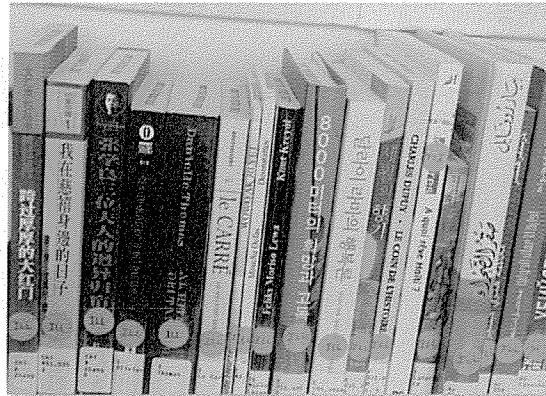
+\$275,000 for research
materials

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Increased Opportunities for City Partnerships



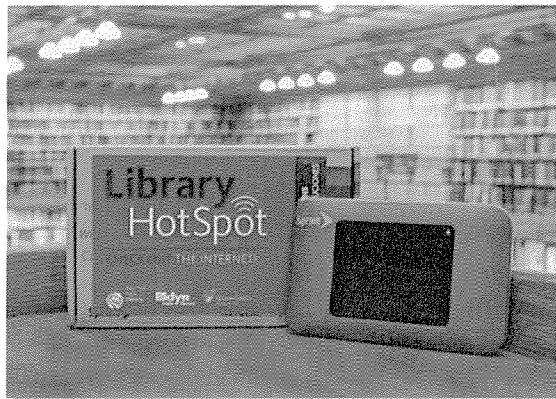
IDNYC



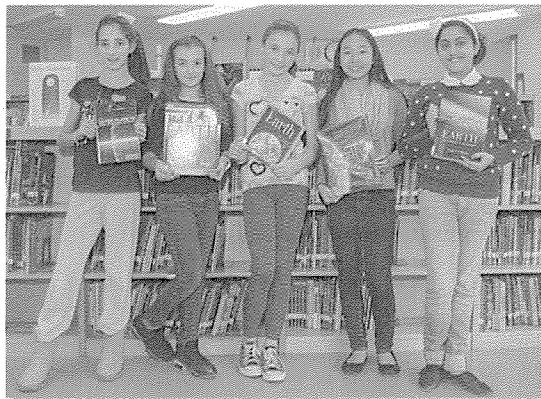
New Americans Corners



Pre-K for All



Library HotSpot



MyLibraryNYC

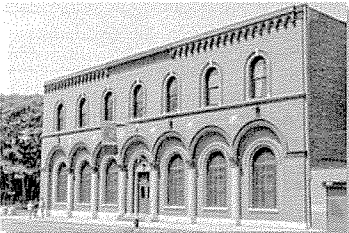


City's First Readers

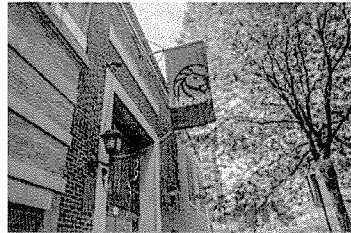
THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Increased Capital Funding

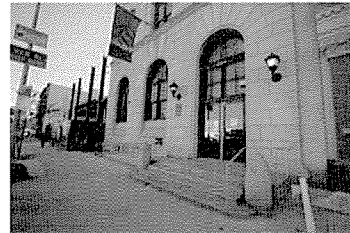
Renovations at 5 Carnegie Libraries



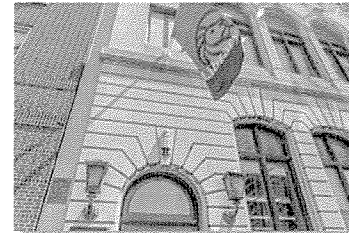
**Hunts Point
BRONX**



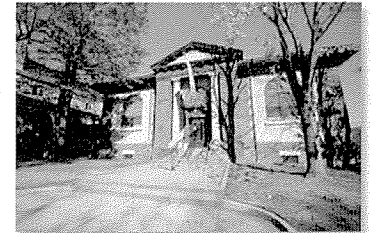
**Melrose
BRONX**



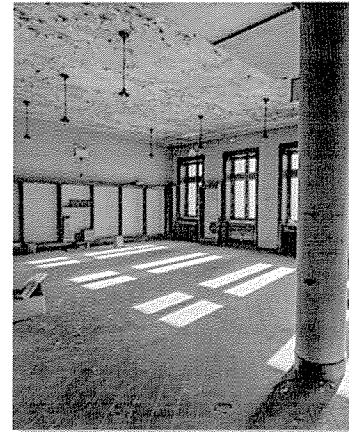
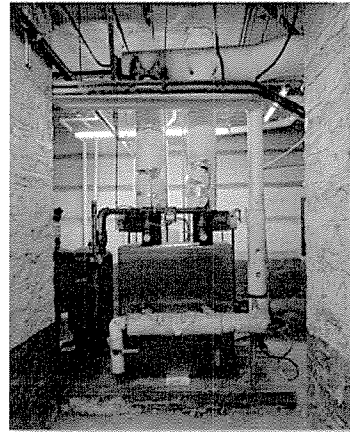
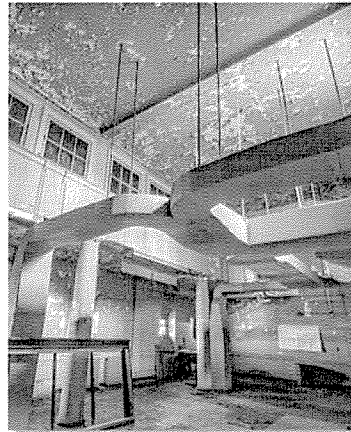
**125th Street
MANHATTAN**



**Fort Washington
MANHATTAN**



**Port Richmond
STATEN ISLAND**



THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Getting the Word Out



New York Public Library to keep 4 more branches open on Sunday: officials

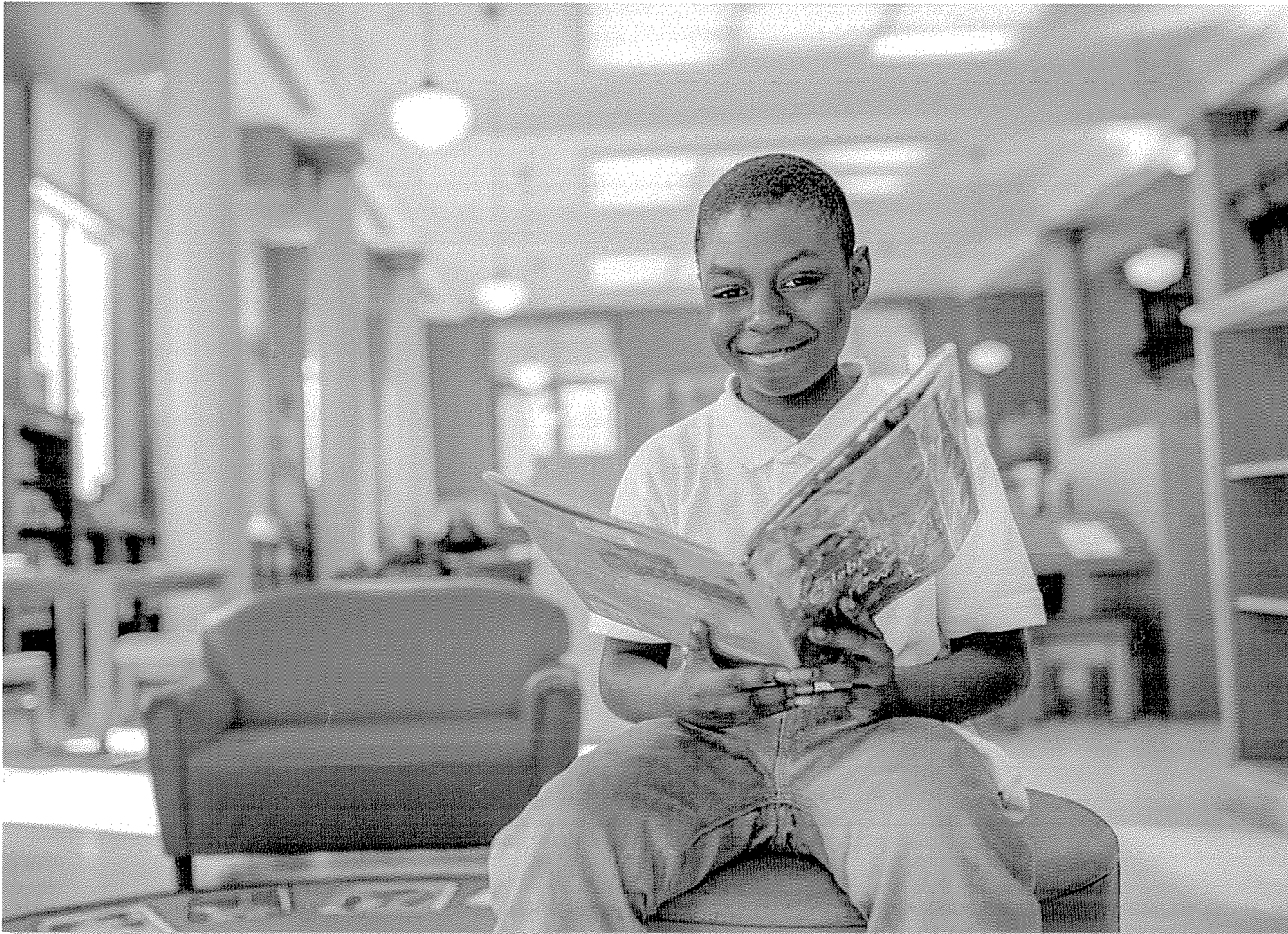


Four more branches will be open on Sundays. Pictured is the main branch of the New York Public Library.

- Branch celebrations
- Signage
- Flyers
- Earned media
- Print newsletters
- Email newsletters
- Social media

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Investing in New Yorkers



Mott Haven Library | BRONX

**THANK YOU
NEW YORK CITY
FOR INVESTING IN
LIBRARIES!**

**THANK YOU FOR INVESTING IN
NEW YORKERS!**



New York
Public
Library



Queens Library
Enrich your life®

INVESTINLIBRARIES.ORG



NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

**COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND INTERNATIONAL
INTERGROUP RELATIONS JOINTLY WITH THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON LIBRARIES**

HEARING ON THE OVERSIGHT OF 6-DAY SERVICE AT PUBLIC LIBRARIES

NOVEMBER 30, 2015

Good afternoon. I am Iris Weinshall, Chief Operating Officer of The New York Public Library (NYPL) speaking on behalf of our President and CEO, Tony Marx, who is out of the country on a prior engagement. I would like to thank Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, Chair Julissa Ferreras-Copeland, Majority Leader Jimmy Van Bramer, Subcommittee Chair Andy King, and the entire City Council, for hosting me today. I appreciate the opportunity to testify on the progress NYPL has made with regard to implementing the historic budget increase our system received for Fiscal Year 2016 (FY16).

I'd like to start by saying "thank you." Thank you to Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, to Mayor Bill de Blasio, and the City Council for this investment in New York City's libraries. As you are aware, the City's three library systems were granted an increase of \$43 million in operating funds for FY16—the largest single-year increase on record. These funds allow us to better serve New Yorkers by opening more days, expanding hours, increasing educational programs, acquiring more materials, and hiring more staff. Furthermore, along with the Mayor and Borough Presidents, your support has dedicated more than \$300 million in Capital funding over the next 10 years to improve and modernize buildings across The New York Public Library,



Brooklyn Public Library, and Queens Public Library systems, \$100 million of which will go to our system. I know all three systems are grateful for this investment and we are thankful to all of our supporters for prioritizing libraries in this year's budget.

Earlier in the year, our President and CEO, Tony Marx, testified before this committee and made a promise. He assured this body, and the constituents it serves, that increasing funding for our library systems would be a wise investment in New Yorkers and in the communities in which we all live and work. Today, I can proudly report to you that your investment—\$19 million to NYPL alone—is already paying off.

Despite the significant budget cuts since 2008, NYPL has continued to maintain 6-day service in the Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island. With the new funds allocated for FY16, we have committed to increasing hours across our 88 branches, from an average of 46 to an average of 50 hours per week. Already this fiscal year, we have increased weekly hours at 36 locations and in January, we will have fully implemented the new schedules across the system. Starting in September, we also opened four additional sites on Sunday—Grand Concourse and Parkchester in the Bronx, and Inwood and Jefferson Market in Manhattan—for a total of seven branches offering Sunday service. All told, the City's investment means NYPL's libraries will be open for 289 more hours each week, or roughly 15,000 new hours over the course of the year. This directly translates to more services for our patrons.



In addition to our hours, we are hiring 93 new branch librarians, 14 facilities and security staff, and 34 other employees focused on our research centers, school outreach, education, and the Bryant Park Stack Extension II. Of our 93 new branch positions, 45 are children's librarians, 22 are young adult librarians, and 26 are adult librarians. As of today, 71 of those positions have been offered or filled. Among those hired is Sun Rho. Sun was brought on in September as a Children's Librarian at the Seward Park branch in Manhattan. Sun is already having an impact, increasing the number of story time sessions and allowing the library to consistently function to its fullest capacity. Billy Gschlecht is another recent hire. A librarian from the St. George Library Center in Staten Island, Billy was formerly an NYPD officer. Now he is assisting St. George with employment and technology programming ranging from résumé building and employment application assistance to basic computing and technology training. To accompany the expansion of hours and programming, we are also hiring 15 people for critical support roles in branches. Jarvis Flowers is one of those we recently brought on. Jarvis will be working on the facilities staff at the Bronx Library Center (BLC). In recent years, attendance has surged at BLC, accommodating as many as 5,000 patrons in a single day. Jarvis represents an expansion of BLC's facilities crew that matches its increased need. We are excited to welcome Jarvis to our staff along with all of his new colleagues.

Along with expanding hours and hiring staff, we are also increasing our circulating collection and accelerating the growth of our essential educational programs for all ages, from our after-school programs to our free English and citizenship prep classes and our technology training. In



particular, we are using this budget increase to magnify the City's investment in the youngest New Yorkers. In support of the Mayor's initiative, we are expanding our early literacy support for young children ages 0–5 and providing story times and other high-quality early literacy programming at 80 sites across the system. Of our 80 locations offering early literacy services, 20 host intensive resources, programming, and outreach to help parents, daycare, and pre-school providers prepare kids to read. Furthermore, we have partnered with Pre-K for All to offer classes that will provide thousands of children with high-quality supplemental literacy services. In FY16, we project that this renewed focus will raise attendance in early literacy programs by 16%, providing services to 320,000 attendees. Note that this is a conservative figure, as we expect our impact to grow even further when we finish hiring all of our new children's librarians. In FY16, we also project that we will be able to increase the science workshop series that we offer for children and teens in our branches by 38%. Finally, \$750,000 of the new funding has been allocated to further supplement our heavily used circulating collections. Specifically, we are investing \$250,000 in branch materials and \$500,000 in e-books.

Of the \$19 million increase in operating funds, \$3 million has been allocated to our research libraries, according to the library funding formula. The system's research libraries serve not only patrons from our City and State, but scholars and researchers from around the world. One of these research centers, the Library for the Performing Arts (LPA), will benefit immensely from the recent addition to our expense budget. This year, LPA's hours of operation will go from 40 to 49 per week, a 23% increase in service that will be fully effective today, November 30. Along



with LPA, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture will add a total of 14 more weekly hours, an additional 7 each at two of its most heavily trafficked divisions: the Manuscript, Archives and Rare Books Division and the Photographs and Prints Division. This will bring each of these divisions up from 29 to 36 hours per week. These hours represent a 13% increase in service for the Schomburg Center overall that started the week of November 2. In addition to increased hours, we have been able to create 11 positions for our research libraries. Of the positions stated earlier, five are full-time library technical support jobs, four are page positions at LPA, and two are librarian positions at the Schomburg Center. I am happy to report that, as of today, all but one of these positions have been filled. Finally, we have also been able to invest an additional \$275,000 in research materials to augment our world-renowned collection.

Not only has this year's budget increase provided jobs throughout the City, enhanced access to critical services for New Yorkers, and supplemented the materials we offer; it has strengthened the connection between our system and the City government. We are proud of our partnerships with the City. Together we've joined with the Human Resources Administration to implement IDNYC, providing the largest enrollment centers in the City along with "pop-up" locations at branches in the Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island. We've also joined with the Department of Education to support Pre-K for All, provide resources and professional development to City schools through MyLibraryNYC, and host middle-schoolers at our main branch through the Teen Thursdays program. We have worked with the Mayor's Office of



Immigrant Affairs to establish New Americans Corners in all 88 of our neighborhood libraries and offer legal support for people seeking citizenship. We have also worked with the City Council on the *City's First Readers* initiative, enhancing our efforts even further to promote early literacy. This list of partnerships is hardly exhaustive. As we work toward accomplishing our common goal of providing much-needed support for New York's low income and working families, we are reminded that our jobs are anything but finished. The City's library systems have dependably contributed immense value to citywide initiatives while increasingly being asked to do more to support the City. I believe we have proven that we are capable of moving quickly and effectively to execute these key public priorities. As this historic investment has grown our capacity, undoubtedly our partnership has strengthened along with it. Moving forward, I ask you to imagine how much stronger it can become if we continue to invest in our City's libraries.

As important as our operating funding is, our physical infrastructure is just as vital to accomplishing our shared goals. NYPL's portion of the \$300 million the City allocated over the next 10 years amounts to \$100 million. This is in addition to \$35 million in discretionary funding allocated by our Borough Presidents and you, the City Council. With our share of the funding, we are in the process of planning the complete renovations of five Carnegie branches: Melrose, Hunts Point, 125th Street, Port Richmond, and Fort Washington. Furthermore, we are still working hard to make the necessary improvements and upgrades to all of our facilities. These steps forward notwithstanding, our building footprint is still aging. Critical maintenance projects



throughout the system range from major renovations to targeted upgrades, including heating and cooling systems; new roofs, windows, and doors; fire alarm, security, and technology upgrades; ADA compliance; and elevator replacements. All of this work is imperative to providing functional, modern buildings that allow for the best possible service to the public. Last year, libraries asked for \$1.4 billion system-wide to bring all City libraries up to modern standards. As stated earlier, the three systems received \$300 million. Given the needs we still face, we are hoping to secure additional capital funding to adequately address our system's vital infrastructure needs.

Suffice it to say, we are excited about this historic increase; but we're not the only ones. We have spread the word to our communities through branch celebrations, signage, flyers, newsletters, earned media, paid media, and social media, and our patrons are elated. Take for example Elly Pichardo, a mother and graduate student from Inwood, studying for her medical school boards. She says that the new schedule has been a "great help," offering her a quiet place to study on the weekend when "everybody is at home and there's no way to focus at home." She adds that she used to have to travel from Northern Manhattan to the Bronx Library Center when she needed to use a computer in a quiet setting or get a last-minute book for her studies. Now, thanks to this budget increase, the Inwood branch is open on Sundays. In commenting on the expanded service Elly asked: "Why can't we get even more hours? It would be a great help for students."



I'd like to conclude with a look at one branch in our system: Mott Haven in the South Bronx. As a direct result of your investment, Mott Haven has undergone a dramatic transformation. The increased funding has allowed this branch to hire a new children's librarian, January Sanalak, who started last month and is already doing outreach to local daycare facilities. Mott Haven has also expand evening hours two days a week and fixed a much-needed critical maintenance issues at the busy branch—specifically, installing new floors. Library Manager Jeanine Thomas-Cross says the City's investment is having a big impact on the neighborhood through increased programs and hours and improved library space. Mott Haven is proof that this unprecedented financial commitment to our City's libraries has, and will continue to provide, a strong return for the people of New York. As implementation continues to move forward, we are excited to work with you to provide New Yorkers with the library spaces and services that they demand and deserve.

Thank you again for all your support and for this opportunity to testify. We remain available to answer any questions you may have.



**TESTIMONY OF LORRAINE RUIZ & BILLY GSCHECHT
BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL**

**COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND INTERNATIONAL
INTERGROUP RELATIONS JOINTLY WITH THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON LIBRARIES**

HEARING ON THE OVERSIGHT OF 6 DAY SERVICE AT PUBLIC LIBRARIES

NOVEMBER 30, 2015

Good afternoon. My name is Lorraine Ruiz, Branch Manager of the St. George Branch of the New York Public Library (NYPL) in Staten Island. I am joined today by Billy Gschlecht, a newly hired adult librarian at our branch. Thank you for having us today. We appreciate the opportunity to testify regarding the impact that the Fiscal Year 2016 (FY16) budget increase has had on our library.

LORRAINE

The St. George branch is one of Staten Island's busiest. With our proximity to public transportation and location on the north coast of the island, our library serves a broad and diverse population. The needs of our branch are as varied as those of our patrons. At St. George, we offer a Techconnect lab and classes as well as English Classes for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and early childhood literacy programming. Prior to Billy joining our staff, we had four librarians focused on serving our adult patrons. This simply was not sufficient to adequately serve our location. St. George is a three floor branch with four information desks. The addition of Billy has afforded us full coverage throughout the building, allowing for the



patron experience our community deserves. We are hugely thankful to have Billy on staff and look forward to the ways he will continue to contribute to St. George.

BILLY

Good afternoon. My name is Billy Gschlecht and I am an adult librarian at the St. George branch of NYPL. I started working for NYPL in early September and it has been a great experience so far. Located close to a homeless shelter and courthouse, St. George attracts a wide variety of patrons requesting everything from basic computer training to advanced legal research. Prior to pursuing my current career, I was a New York City police officer. My experience dealing with diverse populations and serving the City as an NYPD officer has proven incredibly useful in my new role at St. George. My responsibilities include assisting our patrons with résumé building, technology training, and teaching basic computing. I also write for the library's blog and work with our branch's Staten Island History collection, a unique and valuable resource to our branch and Borough. I look forward to growing the Staten Island History collection and continuing to serve our community as my time at NYPL progresses. I'd like to say "thank you" to the Council, Mayor, and NYPL for providing me with this opportunity.



**TESTIMONY OF MICHAEL ALVAREZ & JARVIS FLOWERS
BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL**

**COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND INTERNATIONAL
INTERGROUP RELATIONS JOINTLY WITH THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON LIBRARIES**

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NOVEMBER 30, 2015

Good afternoon. My name is Michael Alvarez, Chief Librarian of the Bronx Library Center (BLC) at the New York Public Library (NYPL). I am joined today by Jarvis Flowers, a newly hired facilities staffer at BLC. Thank you for having us today. We appreciate the opportunity to testify regarding the impact that the Fiscal Year 2016 (FY16) budget increase has had on our branch.

MICHAEL

BLC is a community hub, serving anywhere from 3,000 to 5,000 patrons every day. In recent years, attendance has surged as our location's importance to the community has grown. At BLC, we offer a broad array of programming ranging from computer training, to job search resources, to English language classes. To adequately serve our patrons, we at BLC maintain and operate a facility that matches our high-capacity needs. Prior to bringing Jarvis on board, BLC had six facilities staff. Given the substantial needs at the branch, these six staffers were consistently stretched thin, in particular during the morning shifts. Since bring on Jarvis, BLC has noticed a considerable improvement in the building's condition. Now, every morning BLC opens as a clean and inviting space, allowing us to function to our fullest capacity and better serve the community.



JARVIS

Good afternoon. My name is Jarvis Flowers and, as stated earlier, I am a facilities staff member at BLC. I started working the morning shifts (around 6am to 3pm) at BLC in Mid-October of this year. Prior to taking this position I was a porter at a local supermarket. I can honestly say, I'm much happier at this job and genuinely enjoy what I do. I take great pride in making BLC a clean, Safe, and functional place for the community. With BLC being such a busy and vibrant NYPL location the challenge that this job brings is immensely rewarding. Finally, I'd like to say "thank you" to the New York City Council and Mayor for funding my position and I hope that opportunities like mine will continue to be valued and created in our City's libraries.



**TESTIMONY OF DAWN CHANCE & SUN RHO
BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL**

**COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND INTERNATIONAL
INTERGROUP RELATIONS JOINTLY WITH THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON LIBRARIES**

HEARING ON THE OVERSIGHT OF 6 DAY SERVICE AT PUBLIC LIBRARIES

NOVEMBER 30, 2015

Good afternoon. My name is Dawn Chance, Associate Director of the Lower Manhattan Library Network of the New York Public Library (NYPL). I am joined today by Sun Rho, a newly hired children's librarian at our Seward Park Branch in Chinatown. Thank you for having us today. We appreciate the opportunity to testify regarding the impact that the Fiscal Year 2016 (FY16) budget increase has had on our library.

DAWN

Before bringing Sun on staff, Seward Park was down one children's librarian. Being short-staffed by one employee may not seem like much, however, at our branch it had a drastic impact. The Seward Park library is a community hub for families and adult patrons alike. Given the high utilization of the branch, the lack of one librarian has caused us to cut back on outreach and not provide the full quantity or range of programming we would have otherwise offered. The addition of Sun to our team has afforded us full coverage for our patrons. Sun's work has allowed us to ramp up our outreach efforts, provide additional bi-lingual toddler story time (Toddler Time), and add more early literacy and pre-kindergarten programming. Given the



demands of the Seward Park branch, I don't think we could ever have too much staff. With Sun here, however, I can honestly say that for the first time in a while we're in a comfortable place. We are hugely thankful to have Sun on our team.

SUN

My name is Sun Rho, and I am a new addition to New York Public Library thanks to the budget increase. I am working at the Seward Park Library as a children's librarian. Since I began at Seward Park, our children's staff has been able to cover more hours in the children's room and therefore, when reference services are needed, we now have the ability to provide them more effectively.

Seward Park Library is surrounded by many public schools and private learning centers. Our children's staff regularly invites classes to the library and provides outreach services at community organizations. Our morning schedules are full with class visits, read alouds, and outreach programs. We provide six to ten outreach service classes per week. Since joining the NYPL staff, I personally have had six class visits and read books to more than 100 students. Sometimes, teachers use our services and request special books for their instructional needs. I work hard to assist them in finding the materials they require. I am building up relationships with new teachers and growing in my profession and as I progress, I expect to support more students in their instructional reading. After school, I see many students who I met during the



class visits. They feel comfortable coming back to the library and I enjoy the opportunity to introduce them to recreational reading.

Story Time is another program we host. Students love story time and often check out books with each visit. Our location hosts four sessions of toddler story time each week and two Infant Lapsit sessions per week. I have been presenting those programs on weekly basis. I sing nursery rhymes, do finger plays, read books, and teach kids new words. I give educational resources to parents and caregivers, and guide them to raise their children to become book lovers. In each program, I average more than twenty children and caregivers. Having around 40 people in a small room makes it a bit crowded, but we are having so much fun with songs and books, we hardly notice.

Let me share a story with you. There was one Chinese mother who brought her toddler to the library. Because of her lack of English speaking skills, she always lingered in Chinese book section and never tried Toddler Time. I approached her and encouraged her to join the program. Though I don't speak Chinese, I am very good at body language, and could tell she may give it a try. I was scheduled to do a Toddler Time session on the following day, so I wrote the date and the time on a piece of paper and gave it to her. The following day, the woman showed up. Right after the program, she came to me with a program calendar and a pencil to ask me to circle the programs that she can attend. From that day, she has been a regular participant and she started to check out English board books for her daughter.



Some parents asked me how I learned English. As a first-generation American immigrant, this is how I learned English. I read children's books aloud. The more I read, the more I got interested in children's literature. Now, I'm a children's librarian. I truly believe in the power of reading aloud with children and I share my story whenever I have a chance. I strive to be a good example for new immigrant students and parents and I thank you for giving me a chance to share my experience as a children's librarian for the New York Public Library.



**Statement by Bridget Quinn-Carey, Interim President and CEO, Queens Library
New York City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs,
Libraries and International Intergroup Relations, Jointly with the
Subcommittee on Libraries**

November 30, 2015

Good morning. My name is Bridget Quinn-Carey, Interim President and CEO of the Queens Library. Thank you, Chair Van Bramer and Subcommittee Chair King for inviting me to testify today. Chair Van Bramer, you have been at the forefront of this fight for a very long time; you are a champion for libraries and we are grateful. Council Member King, we look forward to working with you in your new capacity as Chair of the Subcommittee on Libraries. Additionally, thank you Speaker Mark-Viverito, Finance Committee Chair Ferreras-Copeland, Queens Delegation Chair Koslowitz and the entire City Council, as well as Mayor de Blasio, for the significant investment you collectively made in New York City's libraries this fiscal year, and for your ongoing and steadfast support of the mission and programs of Queens Library. Your dedication is greatly appreciated.

Today is a day I have been looking forward to for quite some time. Thanks to the Council's and Mayor's investment in libraries, **I am happy to report that during the week of November 15th, the Queens Library increased its operating hours and began providing six-day service at every community library in the borough.** The impact this will have on the 2.3 million residents of Queens is tremendous. Families, teens, older adults and those who work during the week will finally have weekend access to vital programs and services that were previously available at only 19 of our community libraries.

For the first time in seven years (7), the Queens Library is in a position to dramatically increase the number of employees we have as part of our team. With Queens Library's share of the additional operating funds received at budget adoption (\$12M), 75% has been dedicated to hiring the 129 new employees, including librarians, custodians, maintenance, clerical and other positions needed to implement six-day service. One hundred and fifteen (115) of those positions are union jobs. The new hires we welcome to the Queens Library family are provided with an extensive two-week onboarding program designed to ensure they are ready to provide quality customer service in our uniquely diverse environment. It includes standard orientation and an overview of all the library's departments to get an idea of how we work as an organization. After orientation day, the next three days are

scheduled at Central Library – one day to train on the library’s integrated software and program database; then two days shadowing staff and observing how the Central Library functions. During the second week, they work in two or three libraries in different communities. They are paired with a specialist in their own field to learn best practices while they learn about the different communities in Queens. On the third week, they report to their assigned work locations with a deeper understanding of Queens Library.

All of our libraries will be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays, with the exception of our Kew Gardens Hills community library, which will offer a sixth day of service on Sunday, to meet the specific needs of that community. For our Court Square community library, we will provide Saturday service from the mobile library at Gantry Plaza State Park. The Central Library and the Flushing community library are currently providing seven-day service and we have expanded weekday hours at both locations. On average, our libraries will be open 45.6 hours per week, up from 41 hours last fiscal year.

Many years of budget cuts decimated library materials funding. This has impacted our circulation, along with our ability to provide our customers with a robust, up-to-date selection of materials they have been demanding. Twenty two percent (22%) of the additional operating funds, or \$2.6M, has been dedicated to purchasing new books, journals and digital materials. These collections include homework help materials, ESOL study materials, children’s books, reference work as well as best sellers and leisure reading in all formats. We are investing in more e-books, which are in high demand by our customers. The increase in programs and visitors means we need more materials to lend. Additionally, we need quality collections to support our other programs and services.

Queens Library is among the highest circulating libraries in the world, yet it is the Library’s free services, including computer access, English language classes, job information, health programs and more, which bring people to visit its 65 library locations, 11.2 million times each year, and make it one of the most important and productive destinations in New York City for people of all ages and walks of life.

Maintaining our aging infrastructure is also a short-and long-term challenge for the Library. The average community library is 61 years old, with a quarter of the branches built over a century ago. They are heavily used, and most were not built to accommodate the traffic that we see due to the growth in demand for our services. With the restoration of six-day service this year, our facilities will see even greater use.

Mayor de Blasio made the unprecedented decision to include the three library systems in the City’s Ten-Year Capital Plan in FY16. We are very appreciative and thank him and his administration for this historic act. The City’s commitment to fund the three systems at \$300M over ten years will provide us with the ability to confidently plan short-and long-term capital projects more effectively and efficiently. For Queens Library, \$100M over ten years will help tremendously; however, we have identified capital needs of \$400 million

over the next 10 years to modernize all of our facilities and bring them into a state of good repair.

Queens Library has more than 900,000 square feet of library space, and the vast majority of libraries are poorly configured to meet the demands of the digital age—with too few electrical outlets, too little space for classes, group work, or space for individuals working on laptop computers. Therefore, we are faced with the challenge of modernizing our facilities, maintaining our critical infrastructure, and expanding our public spaces in order to thrive in the 21st century.

Highly acclaimed for our innovation and ingenuity, Queens Library takes great pride in the quality of the programs and services we offer. We are a welcoming, trusted source for information where more than 50,000 people, many from underserved communities, use our resources every day. Last year, our libraries hosted 38,000 free programs with an attendance of more than 700,000. Our early childhood education programs, Young Adult Literacy Program, Adult Education Program, New Americans Program and Job and Business Academy are just several of the critical services that we provide to our communities.

The demand for access to these programs is rapidly increasing, so it is vital that we expand them, and attempt to provide a seat for anyone who needs one. Program attendance increased nearly 10% in FY15, without an increase in our service schedule. For FY16, we can easily project, now that we are accessible on weekends in every community, that demand will continue to skyrocket.

Queens Library is also at the forefront of bridging the digital divide in our communities -- we are the borough's technology hub. We are aligned with the Administration's and the Council's goal to increase broadband access to underserved communities. For too many Queens residents, the digital divide presents barriers to education, job opportunities and tasks of daily living. Approximately 27% of the borough does not have broadband or a computer at home. In certain communities, and in many New York City Housing Authority developments, that number is much higher. You can well imagine how a child's education will suffer without learning critical technology skills, or how an adult can become disconnected without access to information and services available only online.

Queens Library hosts more than three (3) million public access computer sessions a year. Thanks to our partnership with Governor Cuomo and Google, Queens Library lends Google tablets free of charge to library card holders. For those who don't have Internet access at home, the Library lends mobile hotspots, free to anyone with a library card. Mobile hotspots provide wireless internet access at home or while on the go. Customers can borrow one to use with a Google tablet, and harness the power of the internet in their living room or wherever they need it. We are committed to bridging the digital divide and stand ready to partner with the Administration and Council on initiatives to achieve our shared goals.

Even with this fiscal year's generous investment in libraries, we still have a great deal of unmet needs. For example, with the additional operating funds, we have been able to expand ESOL and Pre-High School Equivalency (HSE) classes to 38 community libraries and schedule more sessions on the weekends. This is in addition to the seven (7) Adult Learning Centers that we currently operate where this type of instruction is provided. The New American Communities Survey that was released a few weeks ago reports that there are 600,000 people in Queens county who self-identify as speaking English "less than well." We all know that for a New American, learning English is absolutely critical to insuring a solid economic future. We must continue to increase our capacity in the one place we know the community knows and trusts, the local libraries.

We have recently implemented the Stacks program, a new curriculum-based afterschool program for school-aged children in 18 community libraries. There is a long waiting list at each of these programs. We could easily serve twice as many children as we do now in the libraries in which Stacks is implemented, and we must expand it to the other 44 community libraries. In addition to offering traditional homework assistance and educational enrichment, Stacks is closely aligned to common core and we will be building evaluations into the curriculum so we can measure and assess the impact and outcomes.

And we do know that Queens Library's programs have measurable impact. Last fiscal year, we launched a pilot of our Kick-off to Kindergarten (K2K) program at eight (8) library locations. Sixty-five percent (65%) of the children who participated did not speak English at home. After only eight (8) sessions, which included parent training, more than 85% of the children made measurable educational gains. We have expanded the program, but there are long waiting lists for every session.

Last year, in South Jamaica, the Pinkerton Foundation funded an intense literacy program that included Saturday library service, a grant-funded children's librarian and grant-funded wraparound programs. At the end of the school year, 3rd to 5th grade reading scores at PS 40 increased from 8% to 14% of children reading at grade level. At PS 48, the percent of children reading at grade level increased from 25% to 33%. For the educational health of our City and our children, we need to keep expanding quality, outcome-based programs as it is an investment in the future of our communities, and is what libraries do best.

We are very appreciative of the additional operating funds, but the Council's work is not done. We cannot rest when we still are being forced to turn away more than a thousand ESOL students because we simply do not have another chair to put them in. We cannot rest because the Stacks programs in our community libraries have waiting lists so long, children may never have an opportunity to enroll if we cannot expand further. We cannot rest when funding is needed to continue to provide mobile hotspots to bridge the digital divide as a core service mission for our customers.

Six-day service is something we have all fought long and hard to achieve. With greater hours, comes greater responsibility. We are tasked with not only maintaining the excellence and quality of our programs; we must provide more of it to the people who have been starved of weekend programs in their neighborhoods for almost a decade. When we are asked to do more with less, we deliver. When the City needed a reliable partner to advance key Mayoral initiatives such as IDNYC, UPK or the New Americans Corner, libraries are there with open arms ready to help. Though we did not receive the full \$65M restoration we needed, we found a way to deliver six-day service and increase our programming nevertheless. **In order to lock in the gains we have all worked so hard to achieve, I urge the City Council to work with the Mayor to baseline the operating funds of New York City's three library systems at Fiscal Year 2016's funding level.**

Additionally, I urge the City Council and the Mayor to work together to provide the three library systems the additional \$22M needed to deliver the programming, materials, hours and services necessary for essential library service across the City.

Investing in libraries is an investment in the people of this great City. Together, we do great work, but it can be even greater. We need the City to continue to invest in New Yorkers by investing in libraries.

Again, thank you Chairpersons Van Bramer and King for the opportunity to testify today.

Testimony for City Council

From: Carolyn McIntyre, Co-Founder, Citizens Defending Libraries

Re: Public Libraries

I attended the City Council Land Use Subcommittee Hearing joined by other library users, retired librarians and many of your constituents to show our distrust about what is happening to our public libraries. We share deep appreciation for all that libraries provide, for the free access to knowledge and wisdom for all people and the opportunities to learn.

This is a defining moment. Never before have city officials been asked by a library board of trustees and a developer to sell and shrink a library. This is a truly historic moment as you could see from all the people in the room. Your legacy as a public official is being closely watched by people who were there and many who are not in the room.

You decide whether to sell the Brooklyn Heights Library, actually two libraries, to a private developer and allow him to design a vastly shrunken library without any clear plan for either library and no guarantee on what happens to the sale proceeds. City Councilman Stephen Levin asked, "Is this a good deal for the library and the city as a whole?" We all could see that it is not. The property worth more than double the bid of \$52 million looks like the Donnell sale which only netted less than \$30 million and was replaced by the Baccurate Hotel and condos. The penthouse is selling for more than the gross price of the 5 story library.

Is it good for the city as a whole to sell and shrink libraries when the city is growing and becoming denser? Of course not.

Is it good for the city as a whole to sell and shrink libraries when the city is wealthier than ever and has a huge budget surplus and when use of libraries is at an all-time high? Of course not.

Is it good for the city to sell and shrink libraries when libraries are consistently voted as the number one priority of citizens? Of course not.

Linda Johnson, CEO of BPL said the Brooklyn Heights Library has "too little natural light" and showed the developer's picture of a space with floor to ceiling windows. As Councilman Mark Treyger noted, it looks like 'an Apple store.' Previous testimony from library researchers noted that they built a library with lots of glass in Paris and are now being sued because the direct sunlight destroys physical books. The worst part of Linda Johnson's testimony was when she said this would be a model for other library sales in the other systems. When she spoke of Donnell she only pointed out that they forgot to build an interim library. She said nothing about the real mistakes of Donnell, the drastic shrinkage of library space and the tiny amount the library received. Ms. Johnson also did not point out that selling Donnell did not stop library

sales; it actually ushered in the next step, the proposed sale of Mid-Manhattan and SIBIL, the largest libraries in Manhattan!

We appreciated that councilman Levin pointed out that their picture of a proposed replacement is only one library and there are two libraries at the site. We agree that the Business, Career, and Education Library is best located amongst downtown businesses, near lower Manhattan, accessible by 8 subways and 9 bus lines, and near schools, colleges, and a law school. I have personally met people coming in to use it for help in growing small businesses and for help in job hunting. The Business and Career library is also used by families needing SAT prep and other educational help. It also has law journals which are helpful to people using the court houses.

It was a very telling moment when asked Linda Johnson was asked if additional space could be used for a Business, Career, and Education Library and she was more concerned about “changing the deal for Hudson” than the library or public needs. It was also revealing that Ms. Johnson did not know what programs were happening at the library. She should also be asked how many books are in the library and how many books are proposed for the new library. The architects could not answer those questions and neither could the BPL spokesperson.

Councilman Mark Treyger said there is a growing “public trust deficit” and a pattern of underfunding public assets. The inhumane treatment of public libraries under attack for the real estate has to stop. It includes not fixing or breaking air conditioners, shortening hours in the summer, redeploying staff, using broken air conditioners as an excuse to sell libraries, not fixing elevators, not cleaning bathrooms, computers becoming slower or not working.

Many other groups have signed our letter of support for full library funding, transparency, keeping books in libraries, and supporting the role of librarians. Some of the groups include: The Committee To Save the New York Public Library, Latinos for Libraries, Library Lovers League, Central Independent Democrats, Common Cause, Citizens Action of New York, The Cobble Hill Association, The DUMBO Neighborhood, Association, Boerum Hill Association, Park Slope Civic Association, Park Defense Fund, Brooklyn For Peace, Lynn’s Kids International, and First Unitarian Congregation of Brooklyn-Weaving the Fabric of Diversity.

You decide whether to support this project which will be the first time in history that we will leave less to future generations than we inherited or whether to do the humane and courageous thing by stopping this plan. If you support this plan you open the flood gate to many more library sales and shrinkages. Like the Donnell library which was sold and replaced by a luxury hotel and condos, we will never forget your decision.

Please stand by your constituents and do the right thing,

Public Hearing: Providing 6 Day Service
Cultural Affairs Committee, Library Committee
November 30, 2015

Hillary Saxton
Brooklyn Public Library
1901 Mermaid Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11224

Good morning and thank you to both the Cultural Affairs and Library committees for having me here to speak today. My name is Hillary Saxton, and I am a Young Adult Librarian at the Coney Island branch of the Brooklyn Public Library. I'm brand new to the library system, as well as to New York City, having just moved here from Boston in September of this year. Because of the additional funding that New York City libraries were able to receive thanks to your committees, I was given the incredible opportunity of attending a job fair at Grand Army Plaza this summer. I boarded a bus from Boston the night before the job fair, and had to jump on a bus immediately after, but I knew this was an opportunity not to be missed. Shortly after the job fair, I was hired as a new Brooklyn Librarian. I'm still traveling today, as I live a long commute from the branch where I work, but believe me when I say that Coney Island is worth the trip.

The Coney Island Library is a beloved part of the community. The combined years of service and knowledge of the branch staff is enormous and an incredible benefit for someone new to the library, such as myself. Libraries have always been in high need, and as the demand for safer spaces with digital access grows, so will the necessity for librarians to stretch themselves as much as possible to meet every person's needs. I have been personally amazed and moved by how the staff at my branch has continuously worked above and beyond their means to keep the residents of Coney Island connected and empowered. It's not always easy.

I'm very grateful to be here today as an advocate and as a Brooklyn librarian. Libraries mean the world to me and to so many others, and your committee's work towards keeping libraries funded makes me very proud and honored to stand before you. Your funding has given New Yorkers the access and support they need for the world around them. By providing six day service and helping libraries staff to their full need, you are improving each and every one of our patron's library experience. I hope that you will continue to help provide New Yorkers with libraries that you deem safe, comfortable, and up to today's informational and technological standards. Thank you again for the tremendous support you've given libraries in recent months, and thank you for your time this morning.

I would like to thank the Cultural Affairs and Library committees for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Elena Rivera and I am the Children's Librarian at the Washington Irving Library part of the Brooklyn Public Library system. I have a Bachelor's in Languages and Cultures and a Master's in Library and Information Science with a specialty in Youth Services. Five months ago I moved 2k miles across the United States from Los Angeles CA to Brooklyn NY, leaving behind family, friends and all that was familiar in order to work with a library system whose mission and values closely aligns with my own professional philosophy, and that is to provide free and open access to information for education, recreation and reference along with innovative library services that reflect the diverse and dynamic spirit of its communities.

I have learned a lot about the people who live in Bushwick, that comprise the Washington Irving Library community, my new home and community where I live. They come from different walks in life and backgrounds, and use the library as a resource where they can introduce their child to their first favorite book, where they can work on their resume in search for the perfect job, where teens can have a quiet space to do homework if they can't find it at home and most importantly they come to the library to find hope—to find hope for themselves, for their families and even for the world.

The funding that the library system received to expand to 6-day service made it possible to hire staff—including myself as well as the ability to purchase materials for programming and services. Due to this funding our libraries have been able to expand their hours and provide programs to its communities that they hadn't been able to in a long time. As an example, my branch had been without a children's librarian for many years and were limited to the children's programming carried out by facilitators. As Washington Irving's Children's Librarian, I now run 16 children's programs a month for ages 0-12, not including regular class visits and the outreach work that I do at my neighborhood community shelter. Within a month alone I influence the lives of hundreds of children in Bushwick—and it is all through the work that I do by working with the Brooklyn Public Library—something that would have not been possible without the additional funding received. Just like at my branch, many branches in the system and their communities find themselves greatly benefiting from the additional funding. With your help my library will continue to secure the funds necessary to continue our expanded hours of operation throughout the borough, which in turn will continue to have a positive effect in the lives of the many people that use our libraries.

Thank you again to the committee for allowing me to testify today.

Good morning,

First of all, I would like to thank the Cultural Affairs and Library committees for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Ellen Weaver and I am a Children's Librarian for the Brooklyn Public Library at the Macon branch in Bed-Stuy on Lewis Avenue and Halsey. I have worked for the library since August 24th of this year, but I have worked in libraries for the past three years in both private and public settings. Earlier this year, in the spring, I attended the City Council Preliminary Budget Hearing here at City Hall to show my support for libraries. I would have never imagined that I would get hired by the Brooklyn Public Library just months later. I moved to Brooklyn from Texas 5 years ago and I have been on this never-ending quest to become a true Brooklynite. I figured working for my community would get me closer to that goal, so working for the Brooklyn Public Library has truly fulfilled a dream of mine.

When I was younger, I wasn't much of a reader then my world kind of exploded when the first Harry Potter book was released. Things were never the same for me after that. I think I must have read over 100 books that year. William Nicholson once wrote "We read to know we're not alone", which pretty much sums up why I clung so hard and so fast to books. In a way libraries have the same effect, they let us know that we aren't alone in various pursuits. If you don't know how to begin to write a resume straight out of college, we're there for you. If you need to find that book you read so long ago but you can't remember the title, we're there for you. And if you just need a break from the 2 year old you have been watching all day, storytime is there for you.

Even though I have only been at the Macon branch for about 3 months now, I've gotten to know so many of our regulars and have begun to understand the depth of need the patrons have for certain services. Every morning when I come in there is already a group of people waiting to take advantage of our laptop loan program to work on resumes, job applications, and skill building. During my Wednesday morning storytime 60 people pack the room and that's just one of the three new weekly children's programs we've been able to provide since I've been hired. Next month I am starting a new program that teaches kids the basics of computer programming and I plan on bringing in many more programs that we've never had before. Now that my particular branch is open 7 days a week, I can provide kids with something to do on the weekends and extend my preexisting programming.

As I kid, I was a weekend library goer and I am so happy that kids who couldn't come during the week can now come in and enjoy everything we have to offer. As a children's librarian, I have to speak for those kids and urge the Council to keep supporting our extended service days. The library is such a treasure and I would hate to see it be turned into a privilege, reserved only for those who have the time to come during a weekday. I want to thank you for your support thus far; like I said, you've made a personal dream of mine come true, but please don't forget about those weekday warriors and their kids, not only in Brooklyn, but throughout all three library systems.

Thank you again for allowing me to speak today and of course for approving the new budget. I am hopeful for the future of libraries and thankful to be part of such a noble cause.

Ellen Weaver

Children's Librarian

Brooklyn Public Library | Macon Branch

Christine Zarett – Testimony November 30, 2015

Thank you to the Cultural Affairs and Library committees for this opportunity to testify at this public hearing: providing 6 day service.

My name is Christine Zarett and I am an Adult Senior Librarian at the Brooklyn Public Library New Lots branch. I am a new librarian hired thanks to the additional funding for libraries added to the budget this year.

New Lots is a poor neighborhood. Many patrons that visit the library do not own computers and our library computers are used consistently all day long.

The world has moved online! There is a lot of literature on the digital divide and how libraries are a first line of defense to help bridge that divide. I witness this divide daily. Everyday technology advances and accelerates the population that sits on the other side of the divide only falls further behind.

The patrons from the New Lots branch lack some of the most basic skills. Many patrons will come in to put together and print a resume that day. The need is immediate. A patron can access a computer in the library for 30 minutes. One cannot write a decent resume or cover letter, or complete a job or housing application in 30 minutes. It's impossible!

We now offer a drop-in computer lab two days a week for 2 hours so patrons can have the time to work on applications and resumes. I also provide one-on-one resume help and manage a workforce development program once a week. Because the need is so great this is still not enough.

Thank you for the gift of time! With our newly expanded six day service and new librarians we can facilitate more programs and allot more time for helping patrons. Sadly, it isn't sufficient. Patrons need more computer time to watch tutorials on library databases to gain technology skills and more time to access technology to manage the world that has moved online.

How can we provide patrons more time to access our library services because I believe time is part of the solution that helps bridge the divide?

I lost my job in the recession and was able to recover because I had skills and the luxury of time to access resources.

What I observe daily is more barriers with fewer resources. Also, people are extremely grateful when you help and teach them.

The increased library funding in the budget helped the residents of NYC as well as provided employment for a new librarian like myself, other librarians and library staff. And we are grateful for all you have done. We got a lot of bang for the buck. I hope the city continues to do more, so we can get to a place where people have more technology in the library and the needed time to effectively utilize all the services the library can provide and offer communities. Thank you.

Testimony for City Council

From: Carolyn McIntyre, Co-Founder, Citizens Defending Libraries

Re: Public Libraries

I attended the City Council Land Use Subcommittee Hearing joined by other library users, retired librarians and many of your constituents to show our distrust about what is happening to our public libraries. We share deep appreciation for all that libraries provide, for the free access to knowledge and wisdom for all people and the opportunities to learn.

This is a defining moment. Never before have city officials been asked by a library board of trustees and a developer to sell and shrink a library. This is a truly historic moment as you could see from all the people in the room. Your legacy as a public official is being closely watched by people who were there and many who are not in the room.

You decide whether to sell the Brooklyn Heights Library, actually two libraries, to a private developer and allow him to design a vastly shrunken library without any clear plan for either library and no guarantee on what happens to the sale proceeds. City Councilman Stephen Levin asked, "Is this a good deal for the library and the city as a whole?" We all could see that it is not. The property worth more than double the bid of \$52 million looks like the Donnell sale which only netted less than \$30 million and was replaced by the Baccurate Hotel and condos. The penthouse is selling for more than the gross price of the 5 story library.

Is it good for the city as a whole to sell and shrink libraries when the city is growing and becoming denser? Of course not.

Is it good for the city as a whole to sell and shrink libraries when the city is wealthier than ever and has a huge budget surplus and when use of libraries is at an all-time high? Of course not.

Is it good for the city to sell and shrink libraries when libraries are consistently voted as the number one priority of citizens? Of course not.

Linda Johnson, CEO of BPL said the Brooklyn Heights Library has "too little natural light" and showed the developer's picture of a space with floor to ceiling windows. As Councilman Mark Treyger noted, it looks like 'an Apple store.' Previous testimony from library researchers noted that they built a library with lots of glass in Paris and are now being sued because the direct sunlight destroys physical books. The worst part of Linda Johnson's testimony was when she said this would be a model for other library sales in the other systems. When she spoke of Donnell she only pointed out that they forgot to build an interim library. She said nothing about the real mistakes of Donnell, the drastic shrinkage of library space and the tiny amount the library received. Ms. Johnson also did not point out that selling Donnell did not stop library

sales; it actually ushered in the next step, the proposed sale of Mid-Manhattan and SIBIL, the largest libraries in Manhattan!

We appreciated that councilman Levin pointed out that their picture of a proposed replacement is only one library and there are two libraries at the site. We agree that the Business, Career, and Education Library is best located amongst downtown businesses, near lower Manhattan, accessible by 8 subways and 9 bus lines, and near schools, colleges, and a law school. I have personally met people coming in to use it for help in growing small businesses and for help in job hunting. The Business and Career library is also used by families needing SAT prep and other educational help. It also has law journals which are helpful to people using the court houses.

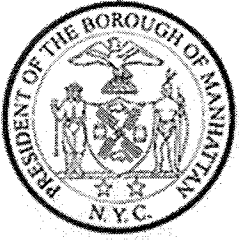
It was a very telling moment when asked Linda Johnson was asked if additional space could be used for a Business, Career, and Education Library and she was more concerned about “changing the deal for Hudson” than the library or public needs. It was also revealing that Ms. Johnson did not know what programs were happening at the library. She should also be asked how many books are in the library and how many books are proposed for the new library. The architects could not answer those questions and neither could the BPL spokesperson.

Councilman Mark Treyger said there is a growing “public trust deficit” and a pattern of underfunding public assets. The inhumane treatment of public libraries under attack for the real estate has to stop. It includes not fixing or breaking air conditioners, shortening hours in the summer, redeploying staff, using broken air conditioners as an excuse to sell libraries, not fixing elevators, not cleaning bathrooms, computers becoming slower or not working.

Many other groups have signed our letter of support for full library funding, transparency, keeping books in libraries, and supporting the role of librarians. Some of the groups include: The Committee To Save the New York Public Library, Latinos for Libraries, Library Lovers League, Central Independent Democrats, Common Cause, Citizens Action of New York, The Cobble Hill Association, The DUMBO Neighborhood Association, Boerum Hill Association, Park Slope Civic Association, Park Defense Fund, Brooklyn For Peace, Lynn’s Kids International, and First Unitarian Congregation of Brooklyn-Weaving the Fabric of Diversity.

You decide whether to support this project which will be the first time in history that we will leave less to future generations than we inherited or whether to do the humane and courageous thing by stopping this plan. If you support this plan you open the flood gate to many more library sales and shrinkages. Like the Donnell library which was sold and replaced by a luxury hotel and condos, we will never forget your decision.

Please stand by your constituents and do the right thing,



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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Testimony to the New York City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries
and Intergroup Relations and Subcommittee on Libraries
Oversight: Six Day Service at Public Libraries
November 30, 2015

Good morning. My name is Gale A. Brewer and I am the Manhattan Borough President. Thank you to Chair Van Bramer, Chair King and to the members of the Committee and the Subcommittee for the opportunity to testify.

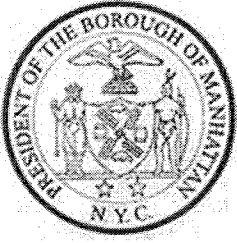
I am thrilled to see how the New York Public Library has responded to the Council's request for Six Day Service at its branch libraries. The additional funds provided by the Council have resulted in an increase of operating hours from 46 hours per week on average to fifty hours per week on average across the system. Importantly the Library has extended the operating hours of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and the Library of the Performing Arts. Each of these rich cultural resources now operate six days a week with extended hours some evenings making them accessible to more and more New Yorkers.

Branch libraries strengthen communities and make our borough more equitable and opportunity-rich:

- Branch libraries support the education of our children, especially the youngest learners.
- Branch library services allow for personal and professional development.
- Branch libraries support personal productivity and cultural engagement.
- Branch libraries are central and safe public spaces.
- Branch libraries provide valuable meeting places.
- Branch libraries accelerate community involvement.
- Branch libraries support the literacy of the homeless.
- Branch libraries are often the major technology provider for individuals and families.

That last point is huge. Residents rely on branch libraries not just to expand horizons but also to keep up with the rapid pace of change in the digital age.

And a branch library is a place that parents can take their children to support their literacy development—it ties in to the larger cultural practices of coming together as part of a community.



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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

In a city with skyrocketing rents and a serious lack of affordable housing, it's also important to consider the phenomenon known as the "living room" experience provided by branch libraries—they offer meeting and conference rooms that are all-inclusive, safe, and friendly.

Extended hours have also resulted in 100 new librarians being hired as well as 15 new custodians to meet the demand on the libraries' facilities.

Six Day Service is essential for our branch libraries. And it is essential that we continue to support extended hours by base lining the funding for Six Day Service. Branch libraries improve the quality of life of all residents in the borough—period.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak before the Cultural Affairs and Library committees. I am also honored to represent the Brooklyn Public Library as a new librarian. My name is Albert Tablante and I am a Young Adult Librarian at the Clarendon Branch in Flatbush, Brooklyn. I want to thank you for increasing funding to public libraries.

I am pleased that all Brooklyn Public Libraries are able to serve their patrons at least 6 days a week. As you know, libraries provide much more than access to printed material. The library offers DVD's, CD's, databases and electronic books. We offer free internet service on library desktop computers and Wi-Fi access for personal laptops, tablets and personal handheld devices. This internet access is essential to engagement in the 21 century, and especially vital in some communities in which internet access is unattainable, like the Flatbush neighborhood my library serves. Patrons use the internet for work, looking for employment, online applications, computer games, social networking and school work at different levels of education.

The Brooklyn Public Library also has many free programs offered to the public. There is cultural, educational, and entertainment programming for all ages, from babies to senior citizens--even musical concerts. You could meet your favorite author at a book signing. There are book talks and book clubs in many of the branches. We even have services like *books by mail* that give patrons access if they cannot physically come to the library. We offer programming for seniors such as knitting, photography, dancing and art and we do school outreach, because of course, we are the biggest champions for literacy.

At the Clarendon branch we have many lively programs for children. We have ESL programs for adults. We have programming geared towards getting students free money for college. We offer basic computer skills for adults. We have Wii video game hours in the meeting rooms which is extremely popular with young adults. All for free.

Our library branch is one of the branches that has extended its hours to 6 days a week. Since being hired on November 2nd of this year, I have worked 2 Saturday shifts. Both Saturdays were relatively busy at the Clarendon branch. Stationed at the reference desk I fielded many research queries and made library cards for new and renewed patrons. All the computers were being used most of the day. Many students were in doing homework assignments and projects.

We have a casual children's program on Saturdays at 11AM, where children under 5 come in for toys and music—and it was well attended. Many patrons came in simply to read the newspaper or to meet up with friends of all ages.

Of course, I am not alone working at the Clarendon branch on Saturdays. The other librarians and clerical staff on our newly opened Saturday have found it to be very good for our patrons. Having more staff and more weekend hours allows us to offer better service to the public. Brooklyn Public Library's 6 day service is so appreciated in our communities, so we ask you to continue to support this important work. I'd like to thank the committee for your time and the opportunity to testify.

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: Nov. 30 10:13 AM

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Michael D D White

Address: 62 Montague St.

I represent: Citizens Spending Librarians

Address: 62 Montague

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

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Name: Lakisha Ruiz, Sun Rho

Address: 42nd St. at 5th Ave, 10016

I represent: NYPL

Address: _____

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(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lorraine Ruiz + Billy Gschlecht

Address: NYPL, 5th Ave + 42nd Street, NY NY

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dawn Chance + Son Rho

Address: NYPL 42nd Street and 5th Ave, NY, NY

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Michael Alvarez + Jarvis Flowers

Address: _____

I represent: NYPL - Bronx Library Center

Address: 310 E. Kingsbridge Road, Bronx

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Iris Weinsall, COO

Address: _____

I represent: New York Public Library

Address: 42nd Street & 5th Ave.

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 11/30/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: William Gschlecht
Address: 479 Claremont Drive Fort Madison IA 52554
I represent: NYPL
Address: _____

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 11-30-15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ALBERT TABLANTE
Address: 96 ALBERTSON PKWY
I represent: BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY (clarendon)
Address: 10 GRAND ARMY PLAZA

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 11/30/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Hillary Saxton
Address: 177 Moffat St Brooklyn NY
I represent: Brooklyn Public Library 11207
Address: 10 Grand Army Plaza

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: Nov. 30, 2015

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ellen Weaver

Address: 331 Rutland Rd. #3, Brooklyn NY 11225

I represent: Brooklyn Public Library

Address: 361 Lewis Ave - Maroon Branch

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: Nov. 30, 2015

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christine Zaratt

Address: 4001 39th Ave Sunnyside, NY

I represent: Brooklyn Public Library

Address: New Lots 665 New Lots Ave
Brooklyn, NY

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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 11.30.15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ELENA RIVERA

Address: 1450 GREENE AVE #2, 11237

I represent: BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY - WASHINGTON IRVING

Address: 360 IRVING AVE, 11237

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 11/30/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Linda Johnson

Address: _____

I represent: Brooklyn Public Library

Address: 10 Grand Army Plaza

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 11/30/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Bridget Quinn-Carey

Address: _____

I represent: Queens Library

Address: 88-11 Merrick Blvd.

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☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Manhattan Borough President

Address: Gate Brew

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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