

COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND
INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS

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HELD AT: 250 Broadway-Committee Rm, 16th, Fl

B E F O R E: JAMES G. VAN BRAMER
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

JOSEPH C. BORELLI

LAURIE A. CUMBO

KAREN KOSLOWITZ

FRANCISCO P. MOYA

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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Tom Finkelpearl

Commissioner of the New York City Department of
Cultural Affairs

Linda Johnson

President and CEO of Brooklyn Public Library

Tony Marx

President and CEO of the New York Public Library

Dennis Walcott

President and CEO of Queens Library

Stephanie Wilchfort

President and CEO of Brooklyn Children's Museum

Leslie Bushara

Deputy Director of Education and Guest Services
At the Children's Museum of Manhattan

Charlotte Cohen

Executive Director of the Brooklyn Arts Council

Michael Glickman

President and CEO of the Museum of Jewish
Heritage

Melissa Diaz

American Museum of Natural History

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[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So, all four of you are going to be on the panel together to start this off. Good afternoon and welcome to the New York City Council and our Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations. My name is Jimmy Van Bramer and I'm proud to be the Chair of this Committee. I'm joined by Committee Member, Council Member Karen Koslowitz from Queens and I know we have other members of the committee coming as well, always a lot going on at the New York City Council. I want to welcome all of you to this oversight hearing on culture pass and other partnerships between New York City's cultural organizations and public libraries. We're also joined by Council Member Francisco Moya also of Queens and of the committee and seeing the four of you on this panel together is, is like a dream because as the Chair of Cultural Affairs and Libraries I don't believe in the nine years that I've been the Chair of this Committee that we've ever had the Commissioner of Cultural Affairs and the three CEOs and Presidents over library systems on the same panel at the same time together but obviously I know and I believe all

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of my colleagues know the importance of libraries and culture and of course the people of the city of New York only benefit when you're all working together, when we are marrying culture, the arts and libraries and of course libraries have always had cultural programing, the arts as a part of their offerings and, and I know Commissioner Finkelpearl is a big fan of our public libraries and a user of our public libraries and a supporter but culture pass is this exciting new and enhanced way that all of you are working together and allowing folks to use one of the greatest single cards that anyone can ever have, which is a library card, which is a... really a, a, a passport to the world in so many different ways and use that to gain even more enhanced access to some of the wonders of our cultural organizations and obviously IDNYC is this wildly successful program but this is a way to get at some of the same goals but in a slightly different way and we can't do enough to invite people into the offerings of the city more and I've always thought of libraries as the most democratic institutions in our society because they're free, open to all, nonjudgmental, no questions asked just come and, and we want our

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1 cultural organizations obviously to be as accessible
2 to all and they do a great job of becoming more
3 accessible all the time, this is part of that. So, we
4 want to talk a little bit obviously about culture
5 pass and how it's going and how it's been successful
6 and how people are taking advantage of this program
7 and some of the other ways that I know our libraries
8 and our Department of Cultural Affairs are working
9 together to enhance the lives of the people of the
10 city of New York. So, I want to thank all of the
11 folks who helped put this together; Matt Wallace my
12 Chief of Staff and the Committee's Counsel Brenda
13 McKinney, Legislative Policy Analyst Chloe Rivera and
14 our Finance Analyst Aliya Ali. I also want to
15 recognize Council Member Joe Borelli from Staten
16 Island has joined us and I know that he is a big fan
17 of our libraries as well. So, with that I don't know
18 who is going first, Commissioner Finkelpearl and then
19 we'll hear from our, our Library Systems... oh, but
20 first for Commissioner Finkelpearl you are subject to
21 our oath not our Public... [cross-talk]

23 TOM FINKELPEARL: Okay... [cross-talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...Library
25 Presidents and CEOs.

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COMMITTEE CLERK: Commissioner please raise your right hand. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony before this committee and to respond honestly to Council Member questions?

TOM FINKELPEARL: Yes, I do.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you.

TOM FINKELPEARL: Okay, good afternoon Chair Van Bramer and members of the Committee. I am Tom Finkelpearl, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. I'm here today to testify in regard to culture pass and other partnerships between our city's cultural organizations and the public library systems. I have stated this publicly before, but it bears repeating almost verbatim what the Chair just said, I firmly believe that our public libraries are great open, democratic institutions. With a footprint that reaches every neighborhood across the five boroughs, they are central to making New York fairer and more vibrant. Branches serve every community in our city, providing a range of programs and services including culture. My mother was a librarian, and I know that Chair Van Bramer is a proud Queens library alum

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himself. So, I'm excited to be... for the opportunity today to explore the connections between libraries and culture in greater depth. The CreateNYC cultural plan, released in July of 2017, laid out recommendations related to cultural programming at libraries. The library systems were critical to the public outreach for the cultural plan. In March of 2017, we worked with the three systems to place public feedback materials in six languages at 31 high traffic library branches, yielding more than 1,200 survey responses. So, perhaps its no surprise that the importance of local libraries to residents infuses the cultural plan. Residents see them as vital sources of information both local and global, spaces for programming and social connection, and community hubs. For our millions of neighbors who speak languages other than English at home, libraries provide a way to receive services and stay engaged. One piece of feedback cited in the plan, originally in Polish, reads "more arts programs for children in libraries, they are cultural centers." Such universal support is hard to come by these days, and it speaks to how libraries have evolved beyond being book repositories to remain central to the lives of New

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Yorkers. With such a clear mandate in the cultural plan to support more partnerships between libraries and cultural organizations, we wanted to move quickly to do just that. So, last year, we provided over 250,000 dollars to the three library systems to support new cultural programing. At Brooklyn Public, Public Library, this funded... this funding supported traditions and transition. This is a partnership with the Brooklyn Arts Council to document folk and traditional artists performing and demonstrating important traditional art forms from underrepresented cultural communities. At New York Public Library this funded... funding supported notes from the reading life. For this partnership with the National Book Foundation, New York Public Library hosted a new discussion series featuring nonliterary celebrities including athletes, chefs, and actors who discussed their connection to reading and identified a book they recommended to the neighborhood residents, copies of which were provided to the attendees. At Queens Library, this funding supported what a wonderful world. In partnership with Louis Armstrong House Museum, the library bought... brought Louis Armstrong's legacy to library branches throughout the

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borough through a series of cultural events surrounding the 50th anniversary of Armstrong's recording of What a Wonderful World. In addition to creating new linkages between programming and audiences, cultural groups and libraries are also establishing physical connections. Some of these are long standing, some are in the works. These unique partnerships build on the respective strengths and expertise of each institution and their mutual commitment to public service for free exchange of ideas. The oldest of these is the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts located in Lincoln Center's campus. Its collections include historic recordings, videotapes, autograph manuscripts, correspondence, sheet music, stage designs, press clippings, programs, posters and photographs. Its programming brings these materials to life for library visitors. Last year, we announced new capital funding for a unique partnership between the Brooklyn Children's Museum and the Brooklyn Library. BPL's Brower Park Library will be relocated inside the museum. The project will enable the Brower Park Library, currently located at St. Marks Avenue in Crown Heights, to move into a modern, family-oriented

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facility on that premises of the Brooklyn Children's Museum while saving Brooklyn Public Library eight million dollars in repair expenses for the branch's current home. It will also allow the museum to resume its tradition of lending items from its 30,000-object collection. The Queens Museum, in a plan originally developed during my time at the institution and Chair Van Bramer's time at the library, will house a branch of the Queens Library inside the building. This will build on the institution's long-standing collaboration with the library system, centered on the new New Yorkers program. This can also work the other way around, with cultural organizations taking up residence inside of a library. The affordable art space development group, Spaceworks is one of the good... one good example that we've funded through DCLA. They developed an underutilized second floor of the Williamsburgh branch of Brooklyn Public Library into affordable rehearsal and visual art studio space. The space is used heavily by local dance groups, musicians, and artists in other disciplines. They also provide regular community programming that activates the space for local residents. DCLA often works directly with the libraries. Earlier this

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month, DCLA's Disability Inclusion Associate led a public workshop on creating facility... and facilitating tactile experiences for cultural audiences at New York Public Library's Andrew Heiskell Braille and Talking Book Library. The workshop, which trained attendees on creating and facilitating tactile experiences for audiences, was attended by representatives from cultural groups around the city. This great partnership with the New York Public Library is one of the ways we're delivering on the commitment to better engage people with disabilities as audience members, artists, and cultural workers. We hope to provide our constituent organizations more of such appropriate opportunities in the future. DCLA's Public Artists in Residence or PAIR program, has also tapped into the library networks. With funding from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, DCLA partnered with Brooklyn Public Library to name Bryan Doerries New York City Public Artists in Residence with the Department of Veterans Services. For the last year, Doerries and his company Theater of War have produced staged readings of Greek plays in library branches and other venues citywide. These productions include community discussions that

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explore trauma and build connections. The many connections between the cultural, culture and libraries are well established. Among the organizations funded by the Department of Cultural Affairs Cultural Development Fund last year, nearly 100 applicants identified over 180 different library branches where their programming would take place. Here's a small sampling of these programs; Willie Mae Rock Camp for girls conducted songwriting workshops at BPL's Central Branch; Chinese Theatre Works performed original productions and traditional works at a number of Queens Library locations including Elmhurst, Flushing, Glen Oaks, and Jackson Heights; New York Council on the Humanities hosted one of its Community Conversations series at Parkchester New York Public Library Branch in the Bronx; and Sandy Ground Historical Society partnered with the St. George Library Center in Staten Island for an oral history project; and... oh, and finally the Aperture Foundation held an artist lecture at the Schomburg Center in connection with their exhibition, Black Dandy and Resistance. There are dozens of more examples of such partnerships. Clearly cultural organizations understand that libraries are ideal

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spaces to connect with New Yorkers. I'm getting there, I'm almost finished. My agency's Percent for Art program has also been commissioning permanent artworks for library branches. From Allen McCollum's installation at the recently completed Elmhurst Library, to the conservation of the monumental doors at Brooklyn Public Library's Central Branch by Thomas Jones, these commissions enrich and engage with the built environment of libraries in all five boroughs. In addition to 17 completed projects in libraries, there are another 14 commissions currently in process. Culture Pass is another exemplary partnership between cultural community and the library systems. The program allows library patrons to check out a limited number of free passes to participating cultural institutions. It joins a range of truly innovative new ways that libraries are engaging residents in 2018, from free streaming on such services as Kanopy, to the range of programs we've discussed here today. The library systems themselves conceived of this exciting new model to open up doors to cultural institutions. It aligns with the plans and vision of the cultural plan to leverage public libraries as neighborhood hubs for

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social and cultural activity. As we've seen with the IDNYC cultural benefits, New Yorkers are eager for new ways to connect with library groups. Culture Pass provides one more point of entry that demonstrates what it means to foster spaces that are truly for everyone. Since it launched this summer, Culture Pass has been used by 70,000 visitors. I applaud my colleagues and the library systems and cultural organizations for this exciting achievement. And I believe it's not enough to simply open a door. You have to actively invite people in. to that end, we worked with NYC and Company and the libraries to promote Culture Pass on LinkNYC kiosks and bus shelters, with an emphasis on underserved communities. We're also promoting on social media and other channels. We look forward to continuing to spread the word about Culture Pass and other programs that expand access to culture for all New Yorkers. Thank you for the opportunity to highlight the important linkages between the cultural sector and the libraries, public libraries. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you Tom and we were hanging on every word so... [cross-talk]

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TOM FINKELPEARL: There's a lot to say...

[cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...in any way
wanting you to rush. Is Linda up first for the
libraries?

LINDA JOHNSON: Yes, and we were hanging
on every word, thank you for your support
Commissioner Finkelpearl, thank you Chair Van Bramer,
members of the Committee. I'm Linda Johnson, I'm the
President and CEO of Brooklyn Public Library and I
appreciate the opportunity to share information and
frankly my excitement about Culture Pass which is a
program that started at the library in July and has
been successful beyond our wildest dreams which
brings me personally great joy as a rabid museum goer
myself, I think nothing could be greater than
actually creating opportunities like this for our
patrons. Just two months ago we announced a new
library led initiative that offers New Yorkers free
admission to a variety of cultural institutions
across the city. Cultural Pass... Culture Pass allows
library card holders to reserve day passes for any of
43 participating cultural institutions in the five
boroughs. From the Botanic Gardens in Brooklyn to

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Wave Hill in the Bronx and the Noguchi Museum in Queens, library patrons can now explore even more of the cultural treasures our city has to offer and of course like everything we do these passes are offered for free. Here's how it works. Library cardholders go to culture pass dot NYC and log in with their library card... log, log in with their library card, browse by date or venue and reserve passes online. A patron... a patron can reserve a pass good for up to two people, though some institutions will allow up to four. Every month, 7,300 passes are available to be checked out. Library patrons can have up to two concurrent reservations at any time and may reserve one pass per institution per year. The success of the program far exceeded the expectations of the libraries and the participating institutions. When the... when the website went live, we were surprised at just how quickly our patrons dove in. One couple wrote us with this heartening feedback: "thank you for establishing Culture Pass, its so inspiring and reminds us of the beauty this city provides its people. We are such a gem on the map because of programs like this."

Culture Pass currently has more than 28,000 active reservations, which means to date 70,000 people will

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be visiting cultural institutions thanks to the program. We are continually adding new partners, since the program launched it has quickly grown from 33 to 43 participating institutions, recently adding new marquee destinations including the Museum of Natural History and the, the museum of Art and Design and the New York Botanic Gardens. We will loan 87,600 free passes for an extraordinary 248,400 individual visits this year alone and expect the number to grow as we continue bringing new partners on board.

Culture Pass furthers the library's mission of providing free information and access to all people while also helping cultural institutions attract new visitors from every corner of the city. It allows libraries to act as a bridge to the cultural resources that are critical to the community discourse we help cultivate every day. We plan to host new educational programs at our libraries, in collaboration with our Culture Pass partners to further enhance the program experience. Funding from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, Charles H. Revson Foundation and the New York Community Trust's Thriving Communities Program enabled us to develop the program, build the online system and staff the

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program. But what is truly extraordinary is the generosity of the participating cultural institutions, which at current levels amounts to 3.4 million dollars a year in, in library visits. Culture Pass has grant funding for three years and we expect to operate the program beyond that, expanding to include even more diverse offerings for patrons in the years ahead. Brooklyn Public Library is not new to cultural programming or partnerships. We host approximately 70,000 free programs a year, including BPL Presents featuring authors, musicians, visual and performing artists from around the world. In 2016, we began a partnership with Bryan Doerries, that Commissioner Finkelpearl mentioned as well and Theatre of War to bring renowned actors to Brooklyn to perform dramatic readings of ancient Greek works, followed by community conversation relating the text to social issues of the day. This project is now citywide, and Bryan is one of the city's Public Artists in Residence. BPL is proud to be a co-producer of the residency and has hosted many stirring performances in our libraries. Last year, funding from the Department of Cultural Affairs allowed Brooklyn Public Library to partner with the

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Brooklyn Arts Council to present the Brooklyn Folk Art and Artists Series highlighting Brooklyn's immigrant communities. Performances by 20 folk and traditional artists were held in a dozen Brooklyn neighborhood libraries, bringing attention to art forms in need of preservation. Brooklyn Public Library is also embarking on another exciting cultural partnership. Next year, we will move the Brower Park Library to the ground floor of the Brooklyn Children's Museum, a city owned building a few blocks from the current library which is a branch that we rent and has significant deferred maintenance. The new branch will be a unique cultural resource, resource for families in central Brooklyn. Visitors will be able to check out books from the library and borrow items from the museum's collection as well as enjoy collaborative programs. A strong partner in the, the, the Brooklyn Children's Museum is beloved by the community, currently they are the most popular Culture Pass reservation in the city and very generous participants in the program. Finally, Brooklyn Public Library will open a new library at 300 Ashland Place in the Brooklyn cultural district, intended to serve the needs of thrive... of a thriving

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community that boasts more than 70 cultural organizations. The branch, housed in a cultural condominium at the foot of an Enrique Norten building will focus on the diversity of arts and culture in Brooklyn and will offer curated collections of books, magazines and other media, as well as programming in collaboration with local groups, to compliment the cultural calendar. This branch, like Culture Pass, will democratize access to the arts and culture for the community it serves and beyond. It is extremely rewarding to join with world class cultural institutions and partners in government so committed to strengthening the cultural fabric of New York City. We are proud to be working with you to expand the ways we provide a democratic and welcoming space for all to engage in learning and enrichment of the high... and enrichment of the highest quality. Thank you for the opportunity to highlight our recent successes.

TONY MARX: Good afternoon, I'm Tony Marx, President of the New York Public Library and I also want to thank Chair Van Bramer, the members on the entire City Council, Tom Finkelpearl the Commissioner and the entire Department of Cultural

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Affairs and all of our cultural institution partners for making to... this success we are celebrating today possible. This, this idea came up organically through the branches in response to community needs. I know that success has a thousand fathers, so, I've heard lots of different stories. Our story which we believe to be true is that we have an innovation projects program where we encourage staff to propose ideas from sort of the bottom up generously funded by the Revson Foundation and in 2014 the Ottendorfer Library won an innovation project for this idea to provide free passes from their branch to the Children's Museum of Art, the Children's Museum of Manhattan and to the Guggenheim. There was of course an immediate, hugely positive result and it inspired all of us and I know every sitting here and everyone in the audience has been working hard at this to think even bigger. I'm particularly grateful to Tom and his colleagues for corralling these, these wonderful amazing cultural institutions to happily join, join in. The... I think it's clear we've outpaced every expectation in the... in the 21st century, the clearest sign of that is when we started it the, the Culture Pass site crashed for several hours so that's

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success, right apparently. The... we got it back up and running so that's good. The New York Times has covered the program six separate times referring to the Passes as golden tickets, I think that's a reference to Willy Wonka probably. The... and we, we are just, you know amazed by it and the anecdotes sort of really bring this home, whether hearing from a young mother in the Bronx who can now afford educational playdates with other children at these institutions, a college student who can enhance their studies with such visits, a family of four that can now consider museums a viable option for weekend options... for, for weekend outings and so many young patrons who are having their first experience at these museums. Lets be very clear, New York City has the crown jewels of cultural institutions of certainly the United States and I believe in the world and too many New Yorkers do not... do not feel that they can and they can't afford and they do not feel welcome and they have not taken advantage, they haven't left their neighborhoods to go to these places and that is a hugely lost opportunity and I'm being polite. This ingenious program, this partnership has opened our crown jewels to the great

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source of strength of New York which is the diversity of our population who now are informed not just by what they learn at the libraries but what they see and learn and are informed by at these cultural institutions and I know the cultural institutions... I was talking with Dan Weiss from the MET just the other day, are just delighted to see that... the audience shift from our parent's generation in these institutions and how essential that is. Since the launch, the New York Public Libraries received 81,000 applications that's for new library cards, we like that, that's a 66 percent increase over the same time last year, it means we can off... use the, the library cards to offer Culture Passes but we can also then of course work with these folks to say and here's what the library can do for you and of course everything we do is free. Of... as has already been noted by my, my colleagues, this is all... this is an important but only one of the many cultural programs, in 2018 we offered 7,000 cultural programs with a particular focus in high need communities. Tom made reference to the Theatre of War productions bringing classics to communities that probably thought they were sort of archaic and irrelevant in showing how, how powerful

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Long Day's Journey into Night is in Mott Haven where, where... people are living, the issues of drug addiction or at St. George's etcetera and also as Tom made reference to, the partnership with the National Book Foundation, full disclosure I'm a Trustee of the National Book Foundation, of the Notes from the Reading Life of bringing the programs that maybe were too often concentrated by us and our center out into the branches. Plus, the Library for Performing Arts and the Schomburg Center, you know preserving and making available knowledge at a time when facts and truth are arguably more important than ever and getting more confused with each other than ever. Inspiring creativity when we are going to need it more than ever. The Commissioner's work, the... my colleagues work at Brooklyn and Queens and these great cultural institutions are really breaking down the barriers in ways that has... haven't been seen before and really are essential for the future not just of this city but of this country. So, Tom, Chair Van Bramer, the entire council our peers... our colleagues in these institutions thank you for making this possible.

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DENNIS WALCOTT: Thank you, Tony, thank you Linda and to Chair Van Bramer, to the Commissioner. Already I'm going to go off script so I'm just warning you beforehand. I, I think this is one of those rare drop the mic moments, so I'll drop a pen instead. When you talk about partnership and collaboration I think you're looking at it both here on this panel but also in the audience as well and this partnership has benefited the residents of New York City especially those communities that we were targeting to reach out to and again with the Chair's leadership as well as the Commissioner's leadership and obviously with my colleagues and those in the audience from our cultural institutions we're doing good stuff, I mean and really reaching people that we have not reached before and I just want to reinforce something that the Chair talked about around the true democratic institution role that libraries play. We play those roles rather strongly, people walk through our doors, so this partnership has benefited those people and more people than ever before. So, I'll just deal with a couple of facts because Linda and Tony have basically stated it all along with the Commissioner. I want to thank our Foundation partners

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for their support and I also want to thank the Commissioner and the Chair for their support and obviously TriLi and one of our many initiatives that we work together on, this has been a benefit to our residents. In the week after the launch of Culture Pass, Queens Library saw a 47 percent increase in the number of library card applications compared to the same period last year, 47 percent. It is so popular that at least according to the manager of our Forest Hills Branch, that entire families have come to sign up for their library cards and moments later have turned around to reserve and print their Culture Passes, just think about it, they come in four their library cards and then turn around and really wanted their Culture Passes. In total, more than 5,200 Queens Library cardholders have secured passes to date accounting for about 19 percent of the total number of the program reservations. Of the 41 participating cultural institutions, seven are located in the borough of Queens and they include the Lewis Latimer House Museum, Louis Armstrong Museum, MoMA PS1, the Noguchi Museum, the Queens Historical Society, the Queens Museum, and the Sculpture, Sculpture Center. Moving forward we will continue to

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educate the public about Culture Pass and work to recruit more cultural organizations in the borough to join this extraordinary effort and then one of the other side bar pieces, it has allowed people to move outside of their boroughs. So, when we take a look at the data we'll see that a lot of people who are coming through our Queens door really are not going to Queens cultural institutions, they're going to other boroughs and that's the way it should be and also the reverse where people are coming to Queens as well and so it really just broadens the opportunity for individuals to see what New York City is about and not just in neighborhood or a borough in particular. In addition to Culture Pass, Queens Library actively works with the Department of Cultural Affairs on many other initiatives including Create New York City, the first ever citywide cultural plan which was the result of Chair Van Bramer's hard work and vision. As a matter of fact, as another aside, one day the Chair and the Commissioner in one of our libraries in Queens and I said let me just pop in to say hi and there was an engaged sit in there, really participating in the discussions and it really laid the foundation along

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with the outreach to the other library system as far as where we are in our relationship with each other. The last fiscal year, DCLA awarded the Queens Library a grant of 85,000 dollars as the Commissioner mentioned for joint programming with Queens Cultural organizations of which the Commissioner referred to was the What a Wonderful World initiative which celebrated their 50th anniversary of the popular Louis Armstrong song with programs at every branch in our system from April to June. Approximately 2,500 customers participated in dozens of activities programs and musical performances related to this marvelous song, I still hear the song in the back of my head... [cross-talk]

TONY MARX: How many times did you...

[cross-talk]

DENNIS WALCOTT: Yeah, over and over again and thanks to... who's in the audience I will continue to hear about it because it is part of a great initiative. Because of the success of this initiative, DCLA has engaged us again and this year will generously provide us with new funding to form partnerships with cultural institutions in the borough. We look forward to sharing these

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relationships in the future. We have also partnered with DCLA to bring world class cultural performances and art to New York City's neighborhood. One example as Tony indicated and Linda indicated, and the Commissioner indicated is the Theatre of War program in which actors read ancient Greek plays that focus on the impact of war followed by discussions with community members about the issues raised in the readings such as domestic violence, mental health and addiction. The readings and conversations have taken place at our central library, Flushing Library and Cambria Heights Library and has drawn over 500 people to those libraries for those types of discussions. We have also had strong partnership as the Commissioner indicated with the Queens Museum, we work in tandem with the museum on initiatives such as our Queens Memory Project and also our Gala that we're holding there on October 23rd for anybody who might be interested which collects personal histories and photographs and other records of contemporary life in Queens. In addition, it helps our older adult department to deliver art history and art classes and projects to our homebound customers. We are also collaborating with the museum on its Queens

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International Exhibition that starts in November which is going to be really unique and really different and through which three of our libraries; Central, Flushing and LeFrak City will have exhibits and workshops and Q and A sessions with participating artists through February of 2019. Next month our Culture Connection program which is a little bit different than this at Central Library will celebrate its fifth-year anniversary. This program on many evenings and afternoons how it's transformed our Central Library into a Broadway stage featuring celebrated musicians and other live performance. In total, Queens Library last year hosted over 1,100 cultural programs comprised of art exhibits, music concerts, and more at no cost to our customers. Over 114,000 individuals attended our programs, an increase of 148 percent compared to the previous year. These numbers reflect how our community libraries can serve as extensions of the city's other cultural institutions. Our Langston Hughes Community Library and Cultural Center is home to the Black Heritage Reference Center of Queens County serving historians, scholars, researchers and students, educators and regular customers with a comprehensive

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reference and circulating collection totaling 40,000 volumes of material related to black culture and cultural arts programs offers independent video screenings, stage presentations, panel discussions, musical concerts, artist exhibits, exhibitions and gallery openings, literature and poetry readings, open mic nights and the annual Langston Hughes celebration in February and our annual Kwanzaa celebration in December. Queens Library's Hip-Hop Programs and Culture initiative offers programs and events that examine the five core elements of hip hop and there will be a test later on for those in the audience as well as on the panel on what those five elements are but to help you along; MC'ing, DJ'ing, Breaking, Graffiti and Knowledge but we all knew that. While recognizing and documenting and celebrating the positive evolution of hip-hop culture... stop laughing I wasn't... and I don't even have to look up to know that you are; spoken word, DJ/mixing, technology, break dance, panel discussions, lectures, art exhibitions and artist talks are just a few examples of the popular programs this initiative offers. We have an impressive music score collection, which probably in all seriousness a

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lot of you did not know, at the Central Library's Fine Arts and Recreation Division. It consists of over 80,000 pieces of sheet music and music related books ranging from ancient to contemporary music from different genres and various countries and over 44,000 volumes of music CDs and DVDs. With the closure of the last classical sheet music store in New York City in 2015, Queens Library has become increasingly important resource for musicians and music lovers alike and we are proud to be able to fill this particular gap. By providing free access to the performing and fine arts, we are opening new avenues of love to discovering and learning to all New Yorkers, they deserve no less. With that I thank you all for the... this committee for your time this afternoon but also thank you for your leadership both Chair and Commissioners and members of the council and our colleagues... our colleagues, our strong commitment to our libraries. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very much Dennis that was one of the most entertaining testimonies you've ever... [cross-talk]

DENNIS WALCOTT: I try... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...provided and unlike some of the other folks who have sat at that table over the years when you go off script I don't worry and... there are some people in the audience who understand what I'm talking about but, but Jonathan doesn't have to worry as much as some other people have over the years in, in that position. So, first of all I want to thank all of you and these numbers are really staggering, this is an incredibly successful program and, and its, it's fascinating and people should know. I also want to give all of you credit for working together because sometimes we can be competitive in a world of finite resources, but I think when we all work together particular these two incredibly important areas that I am privileged to be the chair of only good things can happen for the people of the city of New York. So, I would want to know where do you think is going, how long can it go on, how big can it get and how much money would you need to be able to continue it and keep going?

LINDA JOHNSON: We currently have funding for three years. The bulk of the investment from the operation standpoint has already occurred, building a system and hiring somebody to manage the program and

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so our hope is of course to be able to secure funding to be able to carry this forward and I think there's a good chance that will happen because as I said, the investment has already been made so assuming that the cultural institutions are still interested in participating with us the library would certainly be more than pleased to continue to manage the project and from the feedback that we've gotten thus far this really is an extraordinary way for cultural institutions to reach library patrons that otherwise would not perhaps feel welcome in their institutions and have not perhaps realized just how far the museums and cultural institutions in our city have gone to make their institutions more welcoming to all New Yorkers.

TOM FINKELPEARL: I have an interesting statistic which I believe to be true, which is that about... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I hope it's true because you swore on oath at the beginning of this... [cross-talk]

TOM FINKELPEARL: That's why... [cross-talk]

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TONY MARX: He said he believes it to be true.

TOM FINKELPEARL: I'm head... that's why I'm under oath, so I believe that, and we can... that the total cumulative attendance in person at the library systems cumulatively is about 42 million a year.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Great, libraries...

TONY MARX: It's a little less than that...

TOM FINKELPEARL: 40, 42 million, that's almost exactly the same as... because we do know the numbers on the cultural side so there's 40 million people or 41 million people going to cultural institutions, all of them and about the same going to the libraries, the big difference is the libraries is almost entirely New Yorkers, correct, I mean in numbers, you have people, scholars coming from elsewhere but that's going to be thousands not millions so the idea of saying that there's an untapped audience there because you know we all know that the large percentages of attendance at some museums are people from out of town and that's great and we're all for that but those New Yorkers they're

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New Yorkers who are being left out of the picture and this is this incredible opportunity so we... that's why we're so excited about this and want to make this work long term.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And Tom the IDNYC program which is wildly successful how is this complimentary and, and do people see a difference between this and that?

TOM FINKELPEARL: I think so, oh, thanks. I mean there's a big difference which is if you have your IDNYC you get a one year membership once, right so that's, that's something that exposes you to cultural institutions, we're very glad that some institutions have then retained those folks as... you know as members long term but that's a one time, one year deal, this is something you can continually do, I think there are limits on how many times you can do it each year but... so, they're very different and I... and it's a one ticket, one time, you know for one institution versus a really in depth experience at a small number... at, at assuming number of institutions, we both have about 40 so I think that they're completely complimentary. We've given away about 700,000 free memberships at institutions by this time

and so it is wildly successful also but we also crashed our website, remember that, when it... when it started and so did Obama Care and lots of good stuff crashed websites so I was, you know happy to see that although I remember you went on... Linda went on public radio as I did the day that our website was crashing for IDNYC but all joking aside, I mean these are wildly successful programs. I think other cities are looking at this, I'm a member of the World Cities Cultural Forum and we have been talking to 27 of the largest cities in the world, cultural affairs departments and people what to replicate these programs around the world.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So, I love the fact that you're all getting more library card applications and those numbers were staggering too and in terms of the increases you've seen since, Brooklyn you didn't report your number I don't think in your testimony...

LINDA JOHNSON: I, I didn't but the number is that we're about 60 percent higher for the period of time then we were at the same time last year.

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I mean those are amazing things, right, I mean libraries are always trying to figure out ways to reach those who don't yet have a library card because everybody should have a library card and so this has proven extremely beneficial in so many different ways which is great to see that kind of interest in getting a library card because they'll, they'll use Culture Pass but then they'll also take some materials out that maybe they hadn't thought that particular branch that they're in had and, and it's just... it's just so good on so many different levels. So, we had a question about the, the, the demographic information because part of what we're also trying to do is to reach underserved communities and obviously the libraries and our, our cultural partners work every single day to make sure that every single New Yorker whether they're an immigrant, whether they are undocumented, whether they are in a low income community that we're reaching those folks, are you finding that in... are you... are you getting that data as a result of this program, are you seeing and are you sharing the, the demographic data as well to know that

you're, you're getting folks that maybe have been underserved or underrepresented?

TONY MARX: Obviously that is an area that is crucial for this going forward in terms of assessment. I think we all and I'm sure the institutions want to make sure, the cultural institutions want to make sure that this is bringing in new folks who wouldn't be coming, who can't afford to come rather than simply providing a free pass to those who were coming anyway, I think we all understand, you know we have... we can't do a means test here but we need to assess to see that we're having the impact across the board that we want to have so that assessment is ongoing. Meanwhile the... each of the cultural institutions can set aside spots for targeted neighborhoods defined by zip codes or targeted in other, other ways and I think that can be up to half so, you know we're all trying to think creatively about how to make sure that this has... you know it's, it's... as all... as in so much of library world, you know you have to serve everyone freely, evenly but you know that you have to make extra effort to the people who need that effort even more, more strenuously and that's true of getting the kids

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in the South Bronx to read more books as it is to get the folks in the South Bronx to come to the cultural institutions in Manhattan and, and we accept that.

DENNIS WALCOTT: So, along that line we've been able to take a look at our library card registrations by zip code and we're starting to get into that data and mine that data as well and so we have a breakdown of the top ten, it's unpacking within that top ten I think is the unique challenge so for... [clears throat] excuse me... for example, Elmhurst, Forest Hills, Woodside, Flushing, Jackson Height, Corona, North Corona, Glendale, Ridgewood, Murray Hill, Mitchell Linden, Jamaica, Rochdale so you're getting into some of that but I think as you know in Elmhurst you unpack Elmhurst and in Elmhurst you have a rich demographic of people who are there from a variety of different ethnic and religious and racial groups and so, yeah, we're starting to see those numbers unfold as a result of the targeting and then just to piggy back on something I mentioned earlier it's, it's fascinating in that the top three Culture Pass venues for Queens people have been Brooklyn Children's Museum, MoMA and the Children's Museum of Manhattan and so they have been going

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outside of the borough of Queens to take advantage of it so you've had that cross pollinating of... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Right... [cross-talk]

DENNIS WALCOTT: ...other boroughs as well.

LINDA JOHNSON: Just to very specifically answer your question, the platform that we've built for this project allows you to look at data by patron zip code, so we actually are able to follow and to see exactly where the demand is and who's using which institutions.

TOM FINKELPEARL: We are very aware of that also with the IDNYC free memberships and so you know it was absolutely the case that people in affluent neighborhoods were getting free memberships but I was talking to a very large Manhattan institution that has the largest membership, it was the MET, why do I beat around the bush, the MET told me that they had more members in Corona and they have millions and millions of members within the first year of the free membership than they ever had previous to that so there were more members in Corona Queens, of course that was the question I asked, than

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ever and so there, there are... there were a very large concentrations in parts of the city where there are very large numbers of cards being issued so Corona obviously had a lot of those cards. I just want to say that that's absolutely a goal and I know that we've been talking to the library system and I've heard also that what Mr. Marx said earlier that the idea of targeting zip codes is really a great idea to say that you can set aside a certain number of your free passes to certain zip codes which might be from underserved communities.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So, Dennis just to go back, your top three destinations are?

DENNIS WALCOTT: Brooklyn Children's Museum, MoMA and Children's Museum of Manhattan.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Wow, Children's Museum of Manhattan is... [cross-talk]

TONY MARX: I know, we were talking... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...very exciting... [cross-talk]

TONY MARX: ...in the hallway as a matter of fact... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...about that,
right... [cross-talk]

TONY MARX: ...yeah...

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And, and, and
Brooklyn Children's... was... which is just rocking it
apparently, right, number one in Queens is that...

LINDA JOHNSON: Number one in Brooklyn as
well.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Number one in
Brooklyn and Tony, do you know your top three?

TONY MARX: I'll get back to you Mr.
Chairman.

COMMITTEE CLERK: They're looking now...

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I'm sure it's
the Brooklyn Children's Museum apparently, which is
great, Dennis I also want to think you were plugging
your gala as part of your testimony...

DENNIS WALCOTT: No, I just happened to
mention it, you know as an aside that's all.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I meant to say
that earlier and I, I forgot... Tony... [cross-talk]

TONY MARX: Cool, alright and, and the
envelope please, the New York Public Library is proud
to say that our top, sorry, are MoMA, the Brooklyn

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Children's Museum and the Children's Museum of
Manhattan.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Wow.

TONY MARX: Come on Queens we need...

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And when we say
MoMA we're talking about all of MoMA or just MoMA
PS1, no... [cross-talk]

LINDA JOHNSON: No, PS1 is separate...

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Oh, yeah, right,
okay...

LINDA JOHNSON: And number two for
Brooklyn is MoMA.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Really, that's
wonderful. I'll have to talk to Glenn Lowry about
that, that's a terrific... a terrific thing and of
course we love MoMA PS1 as well equally in, in Long
Island City in particular and are you sharing the,
the data that you're getting with the cultural
organizations so they know that they're also seeing a
different and more diverse in underreached population
in their institutions, right and so they're able to,
to maybe continue those relationships with those new
users as well but the two Children's Museums
certainly indicate a real desire for families to, to

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take their children to these great institutions and,
and to do so for free.

TONY MARX: Sorry, part of our flood
alert for tomorrow.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Oh, okay...

TONY MARX: Sorry.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you. All
of us... [cross-talk]

TONY MARX: I'm, I'm not sure why my
phone thinks I need to know about an amber alert in
Hudson Falls, New York, I apologize...

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Well now you
never know. So, this is great, and I know we have
some cultural partners who are here as well to talk
about this from, from their perspective but this is
very exciting and exciting that you're all here doing
this work. Tom just in closing, so I know you're,
you're, you're funding some more cultural programming
at the libraries directly... [cross-talk]

TOM FINKELPEARL: Yep... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...that is very
exciting in terms of an outgrowth of our cultural
plan work and how do we increase the amount of
funding at the Department of Cultural Affairs as

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actually providing directly to libraries for cultural programming?

TOM FINKELPEARL: Well that's an excellent question, I mean we... this is the first time we've done it and I'm sure these guys would like to hear the incident... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And listening very closely.

TOM FINKELPEARL: I will say just that... no and seriously we, we are providing the capital money to build the libraries in three different places, you... and so this has been a great partnership with Brooklyn Library in two locations and with Queens in one and this is, you know adds up to tens of millions of dollars and so... and this, this is actually the first time we've ever done this, this funding directly to the libraries, it was done sort of, you know as we rolled this out not right at the beginning of the year, this year we're going to get a much quicker head start but we're really, really encouraged with the results last time and also with the... our, you know also building the long right to support Culture Pass.

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I'm sure...

[cross-talk]

TOM FINKELPEARL: And I will... I also just wanted to, to say, you know that Chair Van Bramer was the person who passed the law with another Council Member, Steve Levin requiring us, you know which we embraced to do the cultural plan that we did meet in libraries and that some of you in libraries as well during that, libraries are an active participant in the cultural plan and the disconnect let's say... the additional disconnect between cultural institutions and libraries is not felt by New Yorkers, New Yorkers experience libraries and experience cultural organizations and, and are the patrons of us together, millions and millions of New Yorkers so, you know it was absolutely an important thing to do and we're so excited to be doing it.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I look forward to all of you continuing to work together and all of us working with you, so this panel is excused, and we thank you all so much... [cross-talk]

TONY MARX: Thank you... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...and because they have been referenced so much we have to start

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with Stephanie at the Brooklyn Children's Museum and Leslie from the Children's Museum of Manhattan and is Charlotte here as well, of course from the Brooklyn Arts Council and then we have Melissa and Michael in the next panel, we can't put five together so we'll do two panels and we're just going to take a two minute break before we start this next panel.

[off mic dialogue]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Alright.

Alright, ready to go. Thank you, so it's probably a lot of fun to sit there and hear so many people say so many good things about you, so I want to thank all of you for being here and maybe Stephanie you can start since apparently you are... [cross-talk]

STEPHANIE WILCHFORT: We are the... we are the number one, it's... this is... I feel like I should thank the academy, it's just an amazing, amazing honor. Good afternoon, I'm Stephanie Wilchfort, President and CEO of Brooklyn Children's Museum, a community museum in Crown Heights, Brooklyn and the world's first children's museum. We serve 285,000 children and caregivers annually, most of whom hail from our great borough. I'm delighted to be here today as one of the inaugural partners for Culture

Pass. Being a part of this incredible collective impact effort has been a great gift for Brooklyn Children's Museum. Since we launched the program on July 1st, nearly 3,000 people have come through our doors at no charge using Culture Passes that they've checked out at local libraries, including our dearest of friends at Brooklyn Public Library. Of our Culture Pass visitors, 60 percent are Brooklynites. The largest proportion, about 35 percent, come from our core communities in Central Brooklyn. Bedford Stuyvesant, Brownsville, Crown Heights, Flatbush, East New York and Prospect Lefferts Gardens. Another 14 percent come from South Brooklyn and ten percent from North Brooklyn. we're delighted that 25 percent of our Culture Pass visitors are our siblings in Queens, many of whom have not previously visited our museum in our neighborhood. These demographics are really important because they show that for Brooklyn Children's Museum, the largest numbers of visitors through Culture Pass are coming from communities with some of the highest child poverty rates in the city. These are places where our institutions can have the most impact, providing first cultural experience, experiences that spark curiosity, creativity, and

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lifelong love of learning. There is excellent research showing that museum visits support both socio-emotional and academic success. Culture Pass gives parents and caregivers a joyful tool to promote learning for families. But this isn't only about what museums can provide to families, it's also about what families provide to spaces like Brooklyn Children's Museum. It is the presence of people, their conversations, laughter, and cultural diversity that activate our institutions. More people from more places, from more backgrounds lead to richer and more delightful experiences in our museums. I encourage everyone here to support this effort and also to support the cultural institutions that are participating. For those of us in neighborhoods with less philanthropic support, public funding from the Department of Cultural Affairs and the City Council is critical to the continued strength of our exhibits and programs. We are stronger partners for collective impact initiatives like Culture Pass and IDNYC when we have sustained and dependable public funding that accounts for inflation. I look forward to thinking together about how we might further contribute to Culture Pass and I want to thank Chair Van Bramer for

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being incredibly supportive of us and all of our fellow cultural institutions over the last nine years.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you. Next, you're up.

LESLIE BUSHARA: Thank you... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: You're a very close number two or number three, right, to Brooklyn's... [cross-talk]

LESLIE BUSHARA: I thought I heard number one... oh, no but it's an honor to be here. I'm Leslie Bushara, I'm the Deputy Director of Education and Guest Services at the Children's Museum of Manhattan. Thank you, Chairman Van Bramer, for the opportunity to speak today, we really are honored to be here. For more than 30 years, the Children's Museum has partnered with the city libraries. We know that supporting literacy, helping someone to read and write effectively, is vital to the future of both the individual child and to everyone in our society. Or, to paraphrase the founding fathers if I may, the success of our democracy rests on the literacy of our citizens. Libraries are essential partners with the museums in this work, we work together

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collaboratively. They offer welcoming venues and new audiences for us to share our programs whether they're literacy based, art, science, cultural. In fiscal year 2018 alone, we provided 116 programs in 22 different branches of the New York Public Library. And this past year at the Fort Hamilton branch of the Brooklyn Public Library, we ran a diverse range of programs from modern art to the solar system. Libraries are informal town halls for many neighborhoods, they serve as safe learning environments for all different types of learners. We appreciate that libraries have a willingness to open their doors to the museum and to our work and to partner with us so much so that we raised private funds in order to bring free programs to libraries for our new exhibit around Muslim Cultures, America to Zanzibar. During that exhibit, we expanded our services to the Queens Public Library and we delivered programs in Astoria, Jackson Heights, Corona, Central and Long Island City branches. Our work at the museum and in the community has taught us that children, parents and caregivers enjoy learning in informal and fun ways. Not to be... you know sometimes approached by schools in a way that can

1 make them feel scared or unsafe. Librarians and
2 library visitors have embraced our teaching approach
3 that supports and encourages these different learning
4 styles but it's also really clear that funding is
5 needed for libraries and for museums. To that end, we
6 were absolutely thrilled that the Revson Foundation,
7 Niarchos Foundation and New York Community Trust
8 invested in Culture Pass which is a tremendous
9 program and especially to us being on the Upper West
10 side, we serve the entire community and all boroughs
11 and to be able to welcome families beginning in mid-
12 July, we've had almost 2,000 families visit, visit
13 with Culture Pass from all of the boroughs and we
14 also decided to allot half of those passes in low
15 income communities so we deliberately targeted to, to
16 make sure that Culture Pass really welcomed a diverse
17 group of families to the museum, many who may have
18 come for the first time, many in homeless shelters
19 and the different other programs and groups that we
20 work with and we are just getting started. So,
21 offering free, low cost and reduced admissions
22 remains a critical piece of what we do at the
23 Children's Museum. We fund raise aggressively and we
24 try to make our programs available to as many
25

1 children and families as possible and we're deeply
2 committed to continuing that, its part of our
3 mission, it's part of the ethos of what we do. We
4 remain grateful to our partners, especially the
5 city's public libraries, city agencies, visionary
6 funders and of course to elected officials. Thank you
7 very much for this opportunity and for your support.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you, next.

9 CHARLOTTE COHEN: Good afternoon, I'm
10 Charlotte Cohen, Executive Director of the Brooklyn
11 Arts Council, the leading nonprofit organization
12 supporting Brooklyn's artists and small arts
13 organizations. I'm very happy to be here today to
14 report on our recent successful collaborations with
15 the Brooklyn Public Library system. You've heard a
16 little bit from... already from Commissioner
17 Finkelpearl and President Johnson about the new
18 initiative that we partnered with the library on this
19 year. Our, our partnerships with the library connect
20 artist communities throughout the borough in
21 alignment with our mission to serve and support
22 artists. Taking place at local library branches
23 across Brooklyn, our program Folk Arts and, and
24 Artists Series this spring, it included Midwood,
25

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Brighton Beach, New Lots, and Sheepshead Bay amongst others. The series gave traditional and folk artists a presenting platform to share their talent and expertise with our Brooklyn communities and over the course of only six weeks, we presented 10 folk arts programs at nine branches. In addition to sharing their work with the public, artists were paired with documentary professionals who captured their presentations at each library, so these oral histories and conversations were recorded, and it also provided the artist with high quality work samples to support their future professional development and promotional efforts so there were many tenants of this program in place and taking place at one time. These programs were positively received by patrons and partners alike and the branch supervisor of the Sheepshead Bay Library, Svetlana Negimovskaya shared with us: "thank you for bringing to our neighborhood an amazing cultural show and atmosphere, our audience got a rare and unique opportunity to explore traditions of Mongolian, Pakistani, Georgian, and Bukharan Jewish cultures. Many audience members were encountering the beauty of these cultures for the first time. I still get asked

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for future similar programs and meetings." We were so thankful for this funding opportunity as it gave us a new way to collaborate on an innovative program to support Brooklyn's traditional artist communities. As part of our ongoing programming, BAC also partners with local library branches through our Community Arts Grants program, which distributes hundreds of grants to individual artists and small arts groups every year. This summer, we held Info Sessions of our grants program in community centers across the borough, including local library branches in Canarsie, Midwood, Bushwick, Sunset Park, Williamsburg and East Flatbush. Being able to partner with our local branches helps ensure that artists all over Brooklyn have access to resources and funding to support their work. And that means their work is getting out to those communities when they're funded by us. Additionally, our Creative Coalitions program regularly partners with library branches in Canarsie and East Flatbush to provide much needed networking opportunities for artists and community members to convene and dialogue. Without these partnerships, our work of serving artists would not be as far reaching as it is. Serving artists is at the core of what we

do at Brooklyn Arts Council. These collaborative partnerships with peers like the Brooklyn Public Library help us to realize that goal, which aligns with one of the priorities set forth by the Create NYC cultural plan which stresses increased support to individual artists. BAC is proud to have these collaborative relationships with our library partners and we hope to see continued funding and support, so we can sustain and expand on this necessary programming for the future. Thank you so much for your time and support.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you and the Arts Council does great work and it's good to see you working so closely with the Brooklyn Public Library. I wanted to ask Stephanie and Leslie, so it's great when more people come to your museums but, but it also can put pressure on the museums or create challenges that you didn't already have and I know the Children's Museum in Manhattan, I don't know how you fit any more people into that space which obviously is why another space is going to happen for you but, but talk to me a little bit about that, I mean it's, it's great but are there stresses on, on

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small institution's budget or the staff are obviously working harder than ever in a very good way...

STEPHANIE WILCHFORT: Yeah, in our case there is some stress on our staff, we do want to make sure that we have the right programs, enough programs happening at enough times and there... so we have to... we have increased our staff partly because of this program and some other programs that have brought more people to our museum. We do have the great gift of a city owned space that is large enough to accommodate visitors and so it's been our position that whenever we can engage in a program like this we do open our doors at, at no charge as much as possible. I will... I will just... I just want to... because I'm talking for a minute, I want to add that we have not restricted by zip codes and the reason we've chosen not to do that is that in Brooklyn there can be some very great pockets of need in zip codes that are quote, unquote wealthy so, you know DUMBO, Farragut, Vinegar Hill all share a zip code but there are some very great pockets of need there, the same thing goes for Red Hook and Carroll Gardens and so we wanted to make sure that we were not limiting anybody by zip code.

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: That's

interesting, I don't know Queens Library obviously... I represent 11101 which includes Hunters Point where a lot of people see big glass towers going up, 11101 is also Queensbridge and so incredibly important obviously and I'm sure that Queens Library is all over that but that's, that's a really good point. I want to thank both of you also and I'm sure Charlotte shares this desire to see more funding, both of you did not miss your opportunity to take your shot and mention the need for increased funding for the arts, that's exactly what you should do obviously we're, we're always fighting for more but I, I am proud that we've actually been increasing the budget fairly steadily for both the Department of Cultural Affairs and for libraries, always want more, always can do more and that's kind of my life's work, right, is to fight for more money for libraries and culture, for 20 years for libraries, for nine years including for culture although as President of Queens Council and the Arts of course before I was elected so I was fighting for money for the arts before I was even elected as well but it's, it's great. So, how many passes are available through Culture Pass at any

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particular time or each month or how do you... how do you decide that?

STEPHANIE WILCHFORT: We've... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Do you decide that or does the library decide that?

STEPHANIE WILCHFORT: The... we've worked together with the library, but I believe it is one family pass so, you know in, in our cases it's not one person but it's a family of... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Right... [cross-talk]

STEPHANIE WILCHFORT: ...four or six people per day, per library so you can check out one per day per library at every... in our case at every library in the city so we're making it available at every library.

LESLIE BUSHARA: Uh-huh and, and ours is similar and, and I would just say to answer that we are as you know not a city owned building and we are much smaller but our commitment to really making sure that all families come to the museum is really strong, it's part of our mission so yes, we will have to have other staff and, and make sure that we have programs but it's part of the ethos, it's part of who

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we are. If, if the museum is not diverse which of course it is every day than that... we are not meeting our mission, so this is part of that and we're committed to it.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And just because Stephanie mentioned it and I come from a very large family, I'm one of eight do you limit it to a family of, of six, is that actually a max if, if you... I mean I know it's, it's a lot more rare today than it maybe was in my mom's time but if you have a family with seven kids and they, they need nine passes is that possible or not even possible in the... [cross-talk]

STEPHANIE WILCHFORT: We do serve many, many large families and we don't limit it like that. I, I think that it's possible that on the pass itself there is a limit to the number of people but we at our front desk have a policy that we would never limit the number of people to come on, on a single pass.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Right.

LESLIE BUSHARA: And we have the same, I mean can you imagine a family coming up and, and saying well we only have, you know enough passes for... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Right... [cross-talk]

LESLIE BUSHARA: ...four of the family...
[cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: For the oldest
four, I'm number five... [cross-talk]

LESLIE BUSHARA: Exactly... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...in my family so
that would have really not worked out, yeah.

LESLIE BUSHARA: So, of course every
family that comes is welcome, yeah.

STEPHANIE WILCHFORT: Nobody left in the
lobby.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yeah... no...

LESLIE BUSHARA: And our lobby is too
small anyway so...

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Well thank you
very much... [cross-talk]

STEPHANIE WILCHFORT: Thank you... [cross-talk]

LESLIE BUSHARA: Thank you... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...for being...
[cross-talk]

CHARLOTTE COHEN: Thank you... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...participants
but also really great advocates and, and Brooklyn is
well represented today as you so often are, Brooklyn
represents but it's important to hear. Jonathan did
not do a thing, but we love... we love Brooklyn. So,
thank you very much and our last two panelists
Michael Glickman and Melissa Diaz, if you guys are in
the house, if there's anyone else but this will be
the final panel. I want to thank them for waiting and
being participants in this hearing as well. And
whoever wants to go first.

MICHAEL GLICKMAN: Good afternoon, I'm
Michael Glickman, President and CEO of the Museum of
Jewish Heritage, a living memorial to the Holocaust.
At the museum our crucial mission is to educate
diverse visitors about life before, during and after
the Holocaust. Through this honor the humanity and
dignity of those slain and mobilize that memory in
our shared fight against hate and apathy. Today I
wish to speak to the significance of our museum in
New York's cultural landscape and the ways in which
Culture Pass is an asset towards positive change and
communal engagement. The museum is honored and
pleased to be part of Culture Pass, an important

program in the city of New York. we signed on to partner with Culture Pass soon after it was envisioned, and we have seen remarkable results in just over two months. We had nearly 1,000 passes issued, of that 77 percent have come from outer boroughs. We are an institution committed to being a productive member of the community. the Museum of Jewish Heritage has successfully partnered with different New York City organizations, to share resources and to generate ideas on how best to serve New Yorkers. Proudly collaborative, we've cultivated partners from HBO to the New York City Department of Education, as well as other cultural institutions, libraries, museums and others from across our great city. Partnering with Culture Pass is another way in which we help a wide arrange of New Yorkers access and explore our collection, comprising 40,000 artifacts, photographs, documentary film and survivor testimonies. The Museum of Jewish Heritage is committed to being accessible to all visitors. Our audio guides are free, including our award-winning English tour with Meryl Streep as well as those in Spanish, French, Hebrew, German, Russian, and Japanese. The museum offers multiple opportunities

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for free admission, in addition to the opportunities provided through Culture Pass. We offer free admission every Wednesday and Thursday evening, Cool Culture, which provides historically marginalized families with free admission; complimentary admission on commemoration days and periods throughout the year; and free admission for families during various school breaks. In addition, the museum... the majority of the museum's public programs are offered free of charge. The work that we do is a central part of promoting tolerance in the region's communities. In the past 20 years, the museum has welcomed more than two million visitors and helped to directly educate over 800,000 children. We have emerged as the primary resource in the tri state area for the teaching and learning about the Holocaust and have become the third largest Holocaust museum in the world. Seventeen years after 9/11, the transformation and resurgence of Lower Manhattan is truly astounding. Part of what makes this area of New York City so attractive is the wealth of cultural institutions, one of the most diverse and concentrated groups of museums and historical sites in the world. Anchoring the southern most tip of Manhattan, the Museum of

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Jewish Heritage, a living memorial to the Holocaust completes the historic landscape it shares with the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. Our vision reflected... as reflected in our name, has always been about being a living memorial, not simply a monument but an institution of learning, understanding, and community building. Through vital tools like Culture Pass, we can further our mission and make New York City's remarkable cultural and educational opportunities available for all.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

MELISSA DIAZ: Good afternoon, my name is Melissa Diaz... good afternoon, my name is Melissa Diaz on behalf of the American Museum of Natural History. I'd like to thank the Chairman and the committee for the opportunity to discuss the Culture Pass program and the museum's collaboration with our city's libraries. The American Museum of Natural History is one of the world's foremost centers for scientific research and scientific education. Since it's founding in 1869, our mission has been to discover knowledge about human cultures, the natural world and the universe. The museum continues to uphold its commitment to education through the rich array of

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programs offered to the public. all of these programs are structured to align with city and state educational standards and benchmarks dedicated to increasing scientific literacy, to encouraging students to pursue science related careers, and to providing a forum for exploring the world's cultures. Throughout its history, the museum has also been dedicated to examining critical scientific issues and it pursues its mission into the 21st century with cutting edge technology, world class resources and a renowned scientific staff. The museum houses 34 million specimens and artifacts and is one of the largest natural history libraries in the world. It is the only museum in the country authorized to grant a Ph.D. The museum's collections and exhibits are a national treasure and provide an irreplaceable record of life on earth. The museum is committed to affordability as it provides quality programming. Admission to the permanent halls of the museum is suggested, not mandatory. Roughly half of all participants in our education programs receive financial assistance. The museum welcomes five million visitors each year, including approximately 500,000 New York City school children who visit us

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through school and camp groups. While at the museum, they have the opportunity to participate in hands on activities with trained education volunteers and receive, receive museum prepared materials to enhance their experience, all free of charge. We offer several programs, one of which is Check out the Universe, and now we are pleased to add Culture Pass. Culture Pass allows New York City library cardholders to receive free admission to several New York City cultural institutions, including museums, historical societies, heritage centers, public gardens and more. Through Culture Pass the museum will make 250 passes available every month which will provide visitors general admission and tickets to the LeFrak Theater for up to four people per pass. Since the program's inception in the beginning of September at the museum, 206 passes have been redeemed. Check out the Universe is one of the programs which exemplifies the museum's working relationship with the public. Since May of 2000, the museum has provided over 12,000 vouchers annually through Check out the Universe. Each voucher admits, admits a family of five or less, so Jimmy you just made the cut, to the museum to either a Space Show or a special exhibit. In Fiscal

1
2 '18, there were more than 7,600 visitors to the
3 museum through our Check out the Universe program. By
4 collaborating and utilizing all assets of the city we
5 can remain committed to our founding principles
6 through public works. I thank you Chairman Van Bramer
7 and members of the committee for the opportunity to
8 speak before you.

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you both
10 of you. Michael you mentioned that 77 percent of your
11 Culture Pass participants come from outer boroughs,
12 ten percent I see from Queens, which is great, how
13 does that compare to your traditional attendance
14 figures, what does that look like and, and are you
15 seeing increases from places that you weren't seeing
16 them or is... do you normally get ten percent of your
17 attendees from, from Queens?

18 MICHAEL GLICKMAN: We actually get a
19 higher percentage from Queens.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Oh, really...

21 MICHAEL GLICKMAN: ...than ten percent,
22 we're seeing about 30... from a New York perspective
23 we're seeing about 35 percent coming from Manhattan,
24 nearly 22 percent if I remember correctly coming from
25 Queens, about 30 percent coming from Brooklyn and

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then we're, we're working on the Bronx and Staten Island.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Got it, so you're, you're, you're more diverse or...

MICHAEL GLICKMAN: Yeah, I guess, 35 percent normally from Manhattan.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yes...

MICHAEL GLICKMAN: And then with Culture Pass 22 percent are taking advantage of that and so we have unlimited passes, we have not put any restrictions either by zip code or by the amount of users who can come through, we've issued about 1,000 passes in the two month period which has resulted in about 3,200 visitors coming through, we are free for children under 12 and we're also free for all New York City public school students who have a valid ID so the numbers are actually pretty good for us in that sense.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: That's terrific and your, your attendance is generally speaking is moving in the... [cross-talk]

MICHAEL GLICKMAN: 63 percent ahead of where we were the year before so year over year and in this new fiscal year we're running about 20

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percent over where we were last year, so projections are actually moving in the right direction.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: That's very exciting for your institution... [cross-talk]

MICHAEL GLICKMAN: Yes...

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...and for the city obviously we've been there a number of times over the years to visit you all and the Museum of Natural History you always have a lot of people, I have never been there when there weren't a lot of folks there and you sort of have an endless capacity to take more folks in, no, I mean...

MELISSA DIAZ: We do see fuller days in the summers, we have days in the summer where we'll get up to 25,000 people in a day... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yes, I think I've been there...

MELISSA DIAZ: Right, probably on that day.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yeah.

MELISSA DIAZ: And so... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Several... [cross-talk]

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MELISSA DIAZ: ...we do see a variety of different visitors at ebbs and flows but they go through our 26 buildings with ease.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yeah... no and obviously we've got lots of big exciting plans for you all in the works... [cross-talk]

MELISSA DIAZ: Right... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...as well so you're going to have even more space at some point to put even more people through those doors which is very exciting. So, I want to thank both of you for coming and being part of it and, and contributing to this success story that starts with libraries and, and combines with our cultural organizations and the Department of Cultural Affairs so thank you all for being a part of it, thank you all and with that our hearing is adjourned.

[gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date

October 5, 2018