

Library Advocacy Day – February 25, 2015

A group of **13** library supporters from Westchester joined the New York Library Association's (NYLA) Library Advocacy Day in Albany on Wednesday, February 25th. The group was made up of directors, trustees, staff, and advocates representing the following libraries:

(Armonk) North Castle Public Library	Mamaroneck Public Library	Pound Ridge Library District
Bedford Free Library	Mount Pleasant Public Library	The Warner Library (Tarrytown)
Eastchester Public Library	Mount Vernon Public Library	Westchester Library System
Irvington Public Library	New Rochelle Public Library	



Pictured (L-R): Assemblyman Thomas Abinanti, 92nd District, and Chair of the NYS Assembly Libraries & Education Technology Committee; Maureen Petry, Director, The Warner Library/Tarrytown; Pamela Bernstein, Librarian, and Carolyn Gallagher, Head of Children's Services, Irvington Public Library; Patricia Fontanella, Trustee, Westchester Library System & Library Trustees Association of New York State; Elise Burke, Executive Assistant, Westchester Library System; joined by Ric Swierat, Trustee, Mid-Hudson Library System (standing) and Joanne Sold, Chief of Staff for Assemblyman Thomas Abinanti

We visited all the offices of the **14** legislators who represent Westchester County in the following order:

Senator Terrence Murphy [40th District]
 Senator George Latimer [37th District]
 Assemblywoman Shelley Mayer [90th District]
 Senator Jeffrey Klein [34th District]
 Assemblyman Steve Katz [94th District]
 Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins [35th District]
 Assemblyman Steven Otis [91st District]
 Assemblyman Gary Pretlow [89th District]
 Senator David Carlucci [38th District]
 Assemblyman Thomas Abinanti [92nd District]
 Assemblyman David Buchwald [93rd District]
 Assemblywoman Amy Paulin [88th District]
 Assemblywoman Sandy Galef [95th District]
 Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson [36th District]

Our main ask of the legislators was to have Library Aid funded to the full extent of Education Law or \$102.6 Million. This year's proposed Executive Budget for FY2015-2016 included only \$86.6 Million in Library Aid, an amount which reflects levels equivalent to 1997. The cost of living alone has risen **47%** since then! Assemblyman Thomas Abinanti, Chair of the Assembly's Libraries and Education Technology Committee, has sent a letter to Carl Heastie, Speaker of the Assembly, and Herman Farrell, Chair of the Assembly Ways and Means Committee, in support of additional aid for libraries.

Through the efficient, centralized services provided by the public library systems, like Westchester Library System, millions are saved:

- Facilitating sharing of library materials across the 38 libraries in Westchester
- Ongoing maintenance of technology services including computers and wireless
- Cataloging collection holdings for easier discoverability
- Centralized purchasing of databases
- County-wide collaboration and innovation

FACTS [from 2013]

\$4.6 MILLION SAVED

Libraries save on annual maintenance of 1 Integrated Library System (ILS) that includes over 985 computers in the field

\$4 MILLION SAVED

Libraries save on provision of Wireless Access Network with 76 access points throughout the County

\$7.3 MILLION SAVED

Libraries save on using WLS Delivery for transporting of 2.5 Million items between libraries

TOTAL SAVINGS:

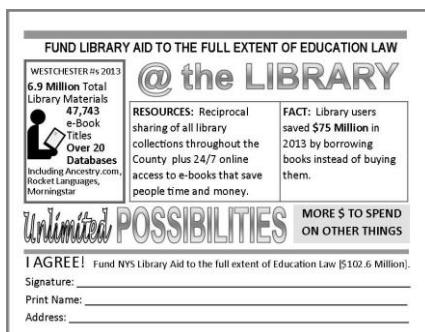
\$15.9 MILLION

For those who could not attend Library Advocacy Day in Albany, a postcard campaign was held at the libraries in Westchester. **Over 1,700 postcards** were sent to our Legislators.

Ardsley Public Library
Briarcliff Manor Public Library
Bronxville Public Library
Chappaqua Library
Croton Free Library
Dobbs Ferry Public Library
Eastchester Public Library
Harrison Public Library
Hastings-on-Hudson Public
Library

Irvington Public Library
Lewisboro Library
Hendrick Hudson Free Library
(Montrose)

New Rochelle Public Library
Ruth Keeler Memorial Library
(North Salem)
Ossining Public Library
Pound Ridge Public Library
Somers Library
Tuckahoe Public Library
Yonkers Public Library
John C. Hart Memorial Library
(Shrub Oak/Yorktown)



Thank you to this year's dedicated group of Library Advocates—for all the ways in which you participated! Library Aid is only 1/10 of 1% of the total State budget, and you helped to make our voices heard!

To quote a recent article by Joe Queenan in [March 2015 edition](#) of *The Rotarian*:

The public library is an indispensable institution that somehow manages to get taken completely for granted. Like the clouds above us, like the birds that fill those skies, it is a glorious creation that is hiding in plain sight. Society pays little attention to it, even though society cannot survive without it. Not any real society.

Let's not take our libraries for granted. The deadline for an on-time budget is March 31st, so there is still time to contact your legislator and ask them to sign on to Thomas Abinanti's letter. You can also [click here](#) for NYLA's Online Advocacy page to send an email message to our legislators that libraries are an excellent investment in New York's educational and cultural infrastructure.

Elise Burke
Executive Assistant
Westchester Library System
