

## Library Advocacy Day – March 2, 2016

A group of 16 library supporters from Westchester joined the New York Library Association's (NYLA) Library Advocacy Day in Albany on Wednesday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>. The group was made up of directors, trustees, staff, and advocates representing the following libraries:

(Armonk) North Castle Public Library	The Field Library (Peekskill) Town of Pelham Public Library	John C. Hart Memorial Library (Yorktown/Shrub Oak)
Eastchester Public Library	Somers Library	Westchester Library System (WLS)
Mamaroneck Public Library	White Plains Public Library	
Mount Vernon Public Library	The Warner Library (Tarrytown)	
New Rochelle Public Library		

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

Assemblywoman Shelley Mayer [90<sup>th</sup> District]

Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson [36<sup>th</sup> District]

Assemblywoman Sandy Galef [95<sup>th</sup> District]

Assemblyman Thomas Abinanti [92<sup>nd</sup> District]

Assemblyman Steve Katz [94<sup>th</sup> District]

Senator Terrence Murphy [40<sup>th</sup> District]

Assemblyman Gary Pretlow [89<sup>th</sup> District]

Assemblyman David Buchwald [93<sup>rd</sup> District]

Senator George Latimer [37<sup>th</sup> District]

Senator David Carlucci [38<sup>th</sup> District]

Assemblyman Steven Otis [91<sup>st</sup> District]

Assemblywoman Amy Paulin [88<sup>th</sup> District]

Senator Jeffrey Klein [34<sup>th</sup> District]

Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins [35<sup>th</sup> District]



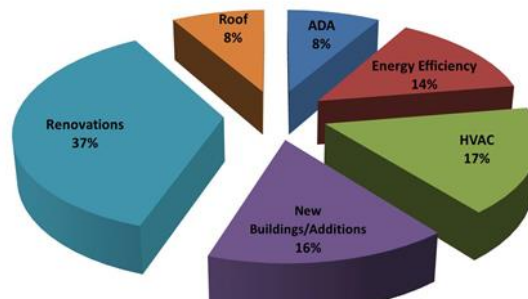
Pictured (L-R seated): Elise Burke, Executive Assistant, Westchester Library System (WLS); Haina Just-Michael, President, New Rochelle Public Library  
(L-R standing): Robert Cartolano, President, Eastchester Public Library; Rob Caluori, Director of Information Technology, WLS; Greg Varian, Trustee, New Rochelle Public Library; Joe Maurantonio, Network Manager, WLS; Assemblyman Steven Otis, 91<sup>st</sup> District and Member of the NYS Assembly Libraries & Education Technology Committee; Tom Geoffino, Director, New Rochelle Public Library; Damon Maher, Trustee, New Rochelle Public Library; Augusta Turner, Adult Services Librarian, Town of Pelham Public Library; and Christina Selin, President, New Rochelle Public Library Foundation

This year's proposed Executive Budget for FY2016-2017 included **\$91.6 Million in Library Aid**.

This amount represents a **0% increase** over the final Library Aid amounts included in the FY2015-16 enacted budget. It is also **11% less** than what is required by Education Law [\$102.6 Million]. Our main focus was to ask that Library Aid be funded to the full extent of Education Law.

Our Advocates spoke eloquently about the value of libraries and the many new and exciting resources and programs available that are tailored to meet the needs of all in the community and the WLS is an excellent example of shared services that supports County-wide technology, collaboration and innovation.

The proposed Executive Budget also includes **\$14 Million for the Library Construction Aid Program**. This represents a **0% increase** since 2006—the cost of living alone has increased almost 20% in the past 10 years—and Legislators were encouraged to increase this funding to **\$30 Million**. The libraries represented and others in Westchester have received funds from this program.



NYS CONSTRUCTION GRANT PROGRAM	WLS TOTALS FROM 2006-2014
<b>Grand Total Awards Received A total of 107 projects for 33 libraries</b>	<b>\$6,146,937</b>
<b>Total Project Costs for Submitted Projects</b>	<b>\$28,971,884</b>

Libraries provide doorways to opportunity and safe gathering places where people can connect to the information they need to transform their lives. Let your Legislators know that an increase to Library Aid is vital. The deadline for an on-time budget is March 31<sup>st</sup>, so there is still time. [Click here](#) for NYLA’s Online Advocacy page and speak up for Library Aid today!

Elise Burke  
*Executive Assistant*  
*Westchester Library System*