

Library Advocacy Day – March 1, 2017

A group of **27** library supporters from Westchester joined the New York Library Association's (NYLA) Library Advocacy Day in Albany on Wednesday, March 1st. The group was made up of directors, trustees, staff, and advocates representing the following libraries:

Eastchester Public Library	Rye Free Reading Room	WLS HSE (High School
Chappaqua Library	Somers Library	Equivalency) Connect! &
Larchmont Public Library	White Plains Public Library	Westchester Seniors Out
Mount Kisco Public Library	Yonkers Public Library	Speaking (WSOS)
Mount Vernon Public Library	Westchester Library System	Volunteers
New Rochelle Public Library	(WLS)	

We visited all the offices of the **14** legislators who represent Westchester County as follows:



Pictured (l-r front row): Rob Caluori, Westchester Library System (WLS); Jane Prendergast, Mount Kisco Public Library; NYS Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins (35th District); Donna Pesce, Chappaqua Library; Denise Bennet, WLS HSE Connect! Volunteer (l-r back row): Michele Rogers, WLS Westchester Seniors Out Speaking (WSOS) Volunteer; Joe Maurantonio, WLS; Erik Carlson, White Plains Public Library; Tom Geoffino, New Rochelle Public Library; Doug Wray, WLS; Haina Just-Michael, New Rochelle Public Library; Aviva Lazarus, WLS HSE Connect! Volunteer

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

This year's proposed Executive Budget for FY2016-2017 included **\$91.6 Million in Library Aid**. This amount represents a **4% decrease** over the final Library Aid amounts included in the FY2016-17 enacted budget and is **11% less** than what is required by Education Law [\$102.6 Million]. Our main focus asked for Library Aid to be funded to the full extent of Education Law.

Our Advocates spoke eloquently about how libraries continue to creatively adapt to meet the needs of their communities. This year we had a strong group of volunteers from WLS's [HSE Connect!](#) program [that assists those seeking to complete their high school equivalency diploma] and the [Westchester Seniors Out Speaking \(WSOS\)](#) program [that helps adults age 6 and older achieve a better understanding of the benefits provided by Medicare and other related services]. These innovative outreach programs are excellent examples of the evolving role of libraries to partner with governmental and other agencies to better engage, inform and empower their communities.

The proposed Executive Budget also includes **\$14 Million for the Library Construction Aid Program**. This represents a **26% decrease** from the \$19 Million included with the enacted 2016-17 budget. Since this program was initiated back in 2006, over \$6 Million was awarded toward submitted project costs of over \$30 Million.

20 HVAC PROJECTS
9 ROOFS
18 NEW BUILDINGS/ADDITIONS
16 ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROJECTS (lighting, etc.)
13 ADA COMPLIANCE PROJECTS (bathrooms, etc.)
44 RENOVATION PROJECTS

**NYS CONSTRUCTION GRANT PROGRAM FUNDS
FROM 2006-2015 WERE APPLIED TO
119 PROJECTS IN WESTCHESTER**

Libraries are education and an excellent example of shared services. They provide educational and recreational materials, access to high speed internet service and programs that focus on digital literacy, early childhood education, and online/virtual learning to all. These tools allow people to build their own learning opportunities to help them reach their full potential and transform their lives.

Continue to let your Legislators know that supporting an increase to Library Aid is crucial. There is still time -- [click here](#) for NYLA's Online Advocacy page today!

Elise Burke
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Westchester Library System
