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

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

- 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.

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!

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