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 2nd. The group was made up of directors, trustees, staff, and advocates representing the following libraries:

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

We visited all the offices of the 14 legislators who represent Westchester County in the following order:
- Assemblywoman Shelley Mayer [90th District]
- Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson [36th District]
- Assemblywoman Sandy Galef [95th District]
- Assemblyman Thomas Abinanti [92nd District]
- Assemblyman Steve Katz [94th District]
- Senator Terrence Murphy [40th District]
- Assemblyman Gary Pretlow [89th District]
- Assemblyman David Buchwald [93rd District]
- Senator George Latimer [37th District]
- Senator David Carlucci [38th District]
- Assemblyman Steven Otis [91st District]
- Assemblywoman Amy Paulin [88th District]
- Senator Jeffrey Klein [34th District]
- Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins [35th District]

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 needs 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.

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 31st, so there is still time. Click here for NYLA’s Online Advocacy page and speak up for Library Aid today!

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