

f Foundation focus

Fall 2009



901 G Street, NW Washington, DC 20001
www.dcpfoundation.org

THE LIBRARY FOUNDATION...SERVING IN TOUGH TIMES

Welcome to the first issue of the DC Public Library Foundation Newsletter!

These tough times have made it even more clear how critical private gifts are to support our public library as it stands in the gap serving our communities during the worst recession since the Great Depression. Demand for public library services is soaring in DC (and across the nation). We are proud that the Foundation is standing strong and serving – creating opportunities for children to learn, job seekers to improve skills, and families to find free cultural opportunities.

By leveraging the library and its resources, the Library Foundation can support services and resources at a fraction of the cost of providing them through stand-alone organizations, ensuring that the library becomes a “one stop shop” of access, education, growth, and opportunity – a constructive respite from hard times.

“We haven’t bought books – or even CDs or DVDs – for months. We just can’t afford it anymore. We use the library instead.”

— Tenley Library Patron

“I just lost my job – right before summer. I was desperate. At the library I get free computer access and free job help. Even financial counseling. I never knew the library did that.”

— MLK Library Patron

“My 8 year old is a reluctant reader. This summer she read six books – that’s really good for her! Thank you for this great program.”

— Chevy Chase Library Parent

Advancing a New Generation:

The Foundation has always made children a priority. Even though times are hard, the Library Foundation remains committed to lifting up the next generation, supporting parents, and providing free and informative cultural programming for children and families.



The 2009 Summer Reading Program, “Be Creative @ Your Library”

served the largest enrollment of children and

teens in the DC metropolitan region through a theme of creativity and the arts. Private support from the Foundation provided guest instructors, performers, incentives and awards - making the library a fun and lively destination for young readers.



For under \$3 per child, the Foundation provided books, performers, and prizes for over 30,000 children.

Citywide free book distribution, made possible through the Foundation and Reading is Fundamental.

Children can lose up to three months of learning over the summer months, and what’s more - it’s cumulative, so that by the time a child reaches middle or high school the deficit could be substantial.* The Library Summer Reading program aims to stem summer learning loss and encourage reading by making libraries engaging places with performers, storytellers, artists and incentives for children to keep reading and keep coming to the library.

* Johns Hopkins University: Center for Summer Learning

The littlest readers

In a time when family budgets are slim, the Foundation provides cultural and educational programming that is free and easily accessible.

“Zachary talked about the pigeon driving the bus all week.”

— Preschool Breakfast Participant

“Now my children have a positive association to the library. Whenever I say we are going to the library, they say ‘Yeah!’”

— Preschool Breakfast Participant



The Preschool Breakfast Club at Benning Interim Library.

Preschool Breakfast Club:

It's Saturday morning and 8 children are gathering at the Benning Library with their caregivers. All are enjoying breakfast together (yes, eating in a library!). After that, a librarian conducts storytime for the children and works with caregivers on the importance of reading to young children. At the end of the 8 week program, each family is

given a free totebag with 17 books to start a home library. The Foundation is proud to have provided funds to pilot this project at three neighborhood libraries: Anacostia, Benning and Watha T. Daniel/Shaw. In 2009/2010 the program will expand to 5 sites and, with your help, expand to even more libraries in the future.

“I'm just delighted that donations to the Foundation make it possible for us to offer parents the opportunity to learn how they can be their children's first and most important teacher.”

— Micki Freeny, Coordinator of Youth Services, DC Public Library

Hearing and making sounds, whether they are of animals or other sounds your child hears, like the honking of a car or water swishing in the bathtub, help your child develop a skill called phonological awareness. This is the name for being able to hear the smaller sounds in words and it starts when children are babies with hearing sounds. By six months of age, children can recognize all the sounds of their native language. Phonological awareness is important because when children try to sound out words when they learn to read, they need first to be able to hear the sounds before they can put them together. By helping your child hear and make sounds, you are helping develop early reading skills.



Infant and Toddler Breakfast Club at Anacostia Interim Library.

Infant and Toddler Breakfast Club:

Springing from the Preschool Breakfast Club is “Sing, Talk and Read (STAR)” a program for infants and toddlers. You can never start reading to children too soon! Thanks to a generous donor, this program will be piloted at 10 neighborhood libraries. It will provide snacks and books to caregivers of very

small children. They will learn the importance of reading to very young children and how to spark an interest in stories and words. In addition, each child will receive a whimsical library bib and a take home library of books.

Teens and Family



Chess Leagues:

For three years the Foundation has been supporting chess leagues at 8 branch libraries for children and teens, culminating in tournament play. Next year chess clubs will be added at Woodridge and Georgetown Libraries. Led by a world-class chess master, chess leagues operate for \$16 per child.

“Chess makes me think ahead to what I want to do next in my life. I want to be a video game designer and I hope to win a chess scholarship to college.”

— Chess League Participant

Chess is a classic game of strategy, invented more than 1500 years ago in India. Legend has it that the ruler of India asked his wise men to devise a way to teach the children of the royal family to become better thinkers and better generals on the battlefield. Chess was the result. Numerous educational and scientific studies have demonstrated that chess improves mental abilities in people of all ages – especially children. According to research, test scores improved by 17.3% for students regularly engaged in chess classes, compared with only 4.6% for children participating in other forms of enriched activities.¹ A study conducted in Texas determined that, on average, students who played chess improved in reading and mathematics at a rate 1.5 to 2 times faster than non-chess playing students.²

¹ “Developing Critical Thinking Through Chess,” Dr. Robert Ferguson

² Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS)



Teens in the new “Teen Space” at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library.

The Teen Scene:

Many thanks to Weschler’s Auction House for choosing the Library Foundation as the beneficiary for its annual Penn Quarter On the Block charity auction. On April 30, our live and silent auction attracted over 120 people and garnered over \$13,000 to help create a hip, new “Teen Scene” at the Martin Luther King Jr. Library. And great news: the Teen Scene is celebrating its

grand opening on October 20 from 3 - 8:30 pm. Donor funds will be used to provide enhancements not otherwise possible including: flip video units, additional computing capacity, a mobile projector unit, additional teen-oriented reading material, and art enhancements on the walls to create a dramatic and inviting space.



Lammond Riggs Library: featuring a mobile created by teens as part of its Summer Reading Program.



“The program was great! Every Opera workshop I have seen has been wonderful. Please keep up this arrangement!”

— Francis A. Gregory Neighborhood Library Patron

Opera in a Library?

YES! Thanks to a generous donor, and partnering with the Washington National Opera, the Foundation was able to fund opera performances at all 25 library branches this summer. Family-

friendly performances of Cinderella included time with performers, a related crafts project for children and a family education guide. For less than \$8 per family, this partnership provided opera to 639 children, parents and caregivers.

Standing In The Gap In Hard Times

GED Scholarships: Through the Michael Fox GED Fund, the Foundation was able to provide full scholarships for 16 people to take the GED examination.

Free Computer Skills Training: Through generous donations, the Foundation was able to provide enhancements to the library's state-of-the-art computer training labs. The library offers a wide range of free computer training classes, but our trainees say it best:

"I'd love to donate to the Library Foundation because I've been extremely blessed to have been given a chance to learn new skills that I couldn't afford to pay for. I hope you accept my donation as a token of my gratitude & appreciation for the computer knowledge I've gained, the excellent volunteer instructors, and for all of the many ways the Martin L. King, Jr. Memorial Library has enriched the community."

— Kelley Jackson

What's Next?

Continuing to stand strong, the Library Foundation is pioneering two new efforts in the upcoming months:

Library Literati

Join savvy young professionals who care deeply about literature and literacy to enjoy events that are intellectually and socially stimulating – while developing private funding for the library. Stay tuned for event details and a benefits package for joining. If interested, call: 202-727-4943

Six New Libraries

As the library prepares to open 6 new branch libraries in the next 16 months – the Foundation will be there. These new libraries – designed by prominent architects – will offer state-of-the-art design, community amenities, and library services. The Foundation will be raising funds to support unique programming at these exciting new branches.



The DCPL Foundation is proud that even in these tough times, with the help of responsive donors such as you, we have been able to keep critical programs operating and even step up to pilot new initiatives.

Founded in 1985, the DC Public Library Foundation adds a margin of excellence to the DC Public Library System by providing programs, services, and materials not otherwise available to the library.

For more information about the DC Public Library Foundation visit us online at:

www.dcpfoundation.org

Secure donations can be made online at our website or contributions by mail should be sent to:

DC Public Library Foundation
901 G St, NW #400
Washington DC 20001

For further information, please call Anna Velazco at (202) 727-4943



Responding to a Crisis:

After the Georgetown Neighborhood Library was destroyed by a 3-alarm fire, the Foundation raised funds for restoration and enhancements not provided through regular funding channels. With those funds the Foundation provided

triage of historic books and documents, restoration of over 60 historic volumes, restoration of 3 paintings from the Peabody Collection and will provide funds for enhancements of the new permanent library and its Children's Room. For more details, click on our website.



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The Library...Now more than ever.

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