



For Immediate Release

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New York's Libraries Continue Online Advocacy Campaign As Budget Deadline Nears

(Albany, N.Y.) As the April 1st State budget deadline looms, the New York Library Association (NYLA) continues to push for full restoration of \$2.4 million in cuts to New York's libraries through a highly successful online grassroots advocacy campaign entitled, "*SnapShotNY: A Day in the Life of A Library.*"

NYLA's advocacy initiative -- similar to ones conducted in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Illinois -- documents in statistics, pictures, videos and user-comments just how busy and essential libraries are to local communities.

The grassroots initiative includes a Facebook page with nearly 4,000 fans, an online petition with nearly 3,000 signatures, and a photo gallery with about 700 photos, all of which tell real stories and put real faces to the positive impact that libraries have on people of all ages.

"The high level of interest and participation in our initial *SnapShotNY* campaign demonstrates the wide support for our libraries and provides tangible proof that libraries consistently provide essential services to our communities, in our schools, and on our college campuses, especially during difficult economic times," said Michael J. Borges, NYLA's Executive Director. "Anybody who cares about their local library and values libraries as a critical community resource can and should go to our advocacy website to share their stories, pictures and videos and sign our petition. Then write, email or call your state legislator and ask them to restore vital library funding."

The advocacy campaign website, www.protectnylibraries.org, also asks libraries to track visits, website hits, circulation, and other services for a single day to demonstrate a typical day in the life of a local library. The single-day statistics below were compiled from 147 participating libraries and can be found at: <http://www.protectnylibraries.org/component/content/article/98>.

SnapShotNY: By the Numbers (combined totals)

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| • How many patron visits? | 177,285 |
| • How many hits did your website receive? | 394,004 |
| • What was the total circulation for the day? | 231,823 |
| • How many people used your public computers? | 21,858 |
| • How many reference questions did your staff answer? | 13,047 |
| • How many children participated in programs? | 5,811 |
| • How many adults participated in programs? | 3,744 |

“The *SnapShotNY* results clearly demonstrate the enormous impact libraries have on our communities on a daily basis. If you take the 231,823 items circulated and multiply it by the average cost of a book (\$18), libraries have saved taxpayers in just one day over \$4.1 million,” stated Mr. Borges.

Throughout New York State, libraries are seeing a tremendous increase in use by people engaged in job searches, applying for jobs online and acquiring job search skills such as resume writing and effective interviewing. A majority of jobs listings are now online and at least 60 percent of prospective employers only accept online job applications.

According to a national survey released this month by the Gates Foundation and federal government, 77 million people used the public library to access the internet in the past year. Forty percent (an estimated 30 million people) used libraries for career purposes, like looking or applying for jobs.

An earlier study by the Gates Foundation, reported that 73 percent of libraries serve as a community’s only option for free internet access and according to the US Dept. of Commerce 38% of Americans still do not have internet access at home. “Which means over 300,000 unemployed New Yorkers do not have internet access at home and therefore rely on their local library for access and the ability to search and apply for jobs online,” said Mr. Borges.

“The Legislature needs to prioritize and restore funding to those public services that provide the most help to people during these difficult economic times and libraries are among those essential services,” continued Mr. Borges.

While local communities recognize libraries as sound community investments -- 97 percent of library budget referendums have been approved by local voters over the past three years -- local support doesn’t always translate to the state level.

“Find another part of the state education budget that has been cut as many times, in such a short period, or is asked to function at 1998 levels or even less if you factor in inflation,” said Mr. Borges earlier this month, as nearly one thousand library advocates rallied at the State Capitol against this fifth round of cuts in only two years. “While the Senate has proposed full restoration and the Assembly has recommended a 40% restoration, we will continue our grassroots campaign to both mobilize library patrons and restore all the funding.”

More on *SnapShotNY*

For more information on the *SnapShotNY* -- *NY’s Libraries: Essential* campaign, to view NYLA’s Facebook page, or sign the online petition, please visit: www.protectnylibraries.org.

About NYLA

The New York Library Association -- America’s first state library association -- was founded in 1890 to lead in the development, promotion and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship to enhance learning, quality of life, and equal opportunity for all New Yorkers.

To learn more about the New York Library Association, please visit: www.nyla.org.

