

# QUEENS LIBRARY GUILD

## LOCAL 1321 NEWS

DISTRICT COUNCIL 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO,  
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### Queens Library Guild Local 1321

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### President's Message—

## *We're exhausted but we are vindicated!*



**John Hyslop**  
*President*

**T**HE year 2012 was another year of uncertainty, budget cuts, a public service hiring freeze, attrition, short-staffing, virtually no materials budget and to top it all off, storms that disrupted our lives and the communities we serve.

With all these headwinds we faced this year, we made sure our customers had clean branches; found the resources they were looking for; received excellent reference; attended informative and interesting programs; got their material checked out in a timely manner; had working computers and printers; learned English; and much more.

We know how hard we work. Our customers know how hard we work. Now, finally, others are acknowledging our hard work. The Mayor's Management Report for FY 2012, available at [www.nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov), states that Queens Library employees have either improved or maintained our performance in five of the eleven evaluation categories tracked since 2008. This report is all the more impressive given that we have lost 180 public service staff since 2008. Additionally, the Center for an Urban Future's report Branches of Opportunity states that New York City's libraries provide numerous services that city residents need with very few resources.

Our politicians need to acknowledge our hard work, increased productivity and commitment to our customers by providing us with sufficient funding to hire more public service staff and give us raises.

Finally, our commitment and dedication to our communities was on display after Superstorm Sandy and the nor'easter. In the aftermath of these storms, many of us suffered loss of power and property, incredibly long commutes and disruption to our work lives. All of us were deeply affected. However, in a matter of days we were providing much needed library services. Everyone should be proud of the work we have done.

In solidarity,  
**John Hyslop**  
*President*



Local 1321 member Amila Gunasekera, custodian of Peninsula, sweeping aside sand from Superstorm Sandy using his own invention!



## Mayor's Preliminary Budget

**I**N the Mayor's Preliminary Budget for FY 2014, he proposed a budget that cuts the Queens Library's FY 2014 budget by more than \$29.5 million. This continues a ten-year trend in which the Mayor proposes budgets that are drastically less than the final budget the City Council and Mayor draft.

New York City libraries' budgets have become pawns in the Mayor and City Council's politics regarding the budget process. The Mayor claims he is being fiscally responsible by proposing an austere budget. The City Council claims they are champions of libraries by adding to the Mayor's proposed budget.

Library supporters and staff are stuck in the middle, because if we do not participate in their budget process no one will listen and our budget will be cut even more. Therefore, the libraries' allies hold rallies, attend hearings and sign postcards to try and convince the City Council and Mayor that NYC's libraries are an invaluable resource and that any cut would devastate the customers we serve.

By June, after all of this advocacy and months of staff anxiety and administration's planning for a bleak future, the City Council and Mayor agree to a budget that is almost what we had the previous year. Meanwhile, each successive year our budget is chipped away — \$1,000,000 here, \$2,000,000 there — and staff morale is decimated.

*The Center for an Urban Future's report Branches of Opportunity confirms what we have experienced these last ten years:*

"Despite record attendance and circulation numbers, and a dramatically expanded list of programs and resources, New York City libraries face a number of serious challenges to their continued success — and number one, without a doubt, is funding. All three library systems have experienced funding cuts totaling tens of millions of dollars in recent years, but cuts aren't their only financial obstacle. In many ways, the lack of security afforded by the city's budget process

has been at least as big a problem."

*The report goes on to state:*

"...library budgets are often not completely accounted for in the mayor's Financial Plan, ... Instead, when it comes time to enact a given year's budget, the City Council tends to negotiate higher funding levels for libraries than is called for in the Financial Plan. According to observers, this process gives the mayor more control over the final budget and lets council members look like heroes when they produce the inevitable restorations."

*Our customers are demanding more and more services that Queens Library staff cannot provide because we do not have consistent financial resources. Queens Library staff members know this and our politicians have acknowledged it. Again, from the Center for an Urban Future's report:*

"... the revenue sources both parties agree upon in order to provide library funding are guaranteed for only one year. The discrepancy between the libraries' ostensible budget as seen in the Financial Plan and their actual budget has tended to not

only continue from year to year but widen even further. In 2007, City Council Speaker Christine Quinn acknowledged the toll this annual Kabuki dance can take on an agency's effectiveness and, along with several other government supported organizations and programs, announced the city's intention to start 'baselining' library budgets in the Financial Plan...but the city never got around to correcting the accounting gimmick that shorts libraries in the Financial Plan."

The library's budget has become political fodder, with politicians using us to further their causes. It's time for a budget that every year allows every Local 1321 member to continue to provide the excellent services our customers need. It's time for real budget change that protects all library services and staff. It's time for baseline funding legislation!



## Save Our Public Libraries!



### NYC's Public Libraries: In Demand but Underfunded and Understaffed

#### **Demand for Public Library Services: WAY UP**

In Fiscal Year 2011, over 40.5 million visitors came to New York's 206 public library branches. This number reflects a dramatic increase in the demand for public library services over the last decade. During that period:

- Circulation is up 59%, program attendance 40%, and program sessions 27% across the three systems.
- Queens Public Library circulation increased 25% and program attendance 13%.
- NYPL circulation increased 60% and program attendance 40%.
- Out of 25 large urban public library systems, Brooklyn ranks first, NYPL second and Queens third in the total number of programs offered.
- Brooklyn Public Library circulation increased 77% and program attendance 41%.

#### **Public Library Funding: WAY DOWN**

Since FY 2009, overall library funding is down \$67 million, or 22.1 percent, falling from \$366 million to \$299 million. Over the same period:

- New York Public Library (NYPL) funding is down \$23 million (17 percent).
- Brooklyn Public Library funding is down \$17 million (17 percent).
- Research Library funding is down \$9.6 million (30 percent).
- Queens Public Library funding is down \$17.4 million (17.5 percent).

The FY 2014 Preliminary Budget funds the library systems at just \$193 million, an incredible \$106 million below the FY 2013 Adopted Budget.

#### **Front-Line Staff Headcounts: WAY DOWN**

During the period 2002-2012, the number of front-line library staff in the three library systems declined by 20%.

#### **Baseline Funding: A BETTER SOLUTION**

Finding a permanent, stable source of baseline funding for New York City's public libraries is a better solution than the annual round of proposed budget cutbacks and restorations that currently takes place.

- The union has proposed legislation allocating 2.5% of existing city property tax assessments to public library budgets, which would benefit public library systems with a stable source of funding.
- It would allow staff to better serve patrons and benefit communities citywide, whose property values also rise when a public library is located nearby.



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(212) 815-1000 - [www.dc37.net](http://www.dc37.net) • Lillian Roberts, Executive Director



## Securing Our Future —

# Consistent Funding to Libraries is Necessary

**T**HE January 2013 Center for Urban Future report *Branches of Opportunity*, details how New York City's libraries are utilized; that they are under-funded and continuing budget cuts have not kept pace with customers' growing needs.

In 1896, the Queens Library began cataloging and lending books and newspapers to meet the needs of local residents, including materials in languages other than English — German, Polish, and Italian. Ever since then, Queens Library's employees have been trying to meet the demands of every local community. In the 1900s, the library launched programs for all ages. In the 1910s, the library offered resources about influenza and actively participated on the home-front during World War I. In the 1930s, the library started offering audio material. In the 1940s, the library created programs and services to assist in the war effort. In the 1950s and 1960s, the library grew considerably to meet Queens' postwar growth. In the 1970s, the library began lending movies. Also in that decade the library established the Adult Literacy Program to teach literacy to adults. In the 1980s, the Job Information Center was opened. In the 1990s, the library began offering computer and Internet services. Also in the 1990s, using neighborhood population data from the U.S. Census, the library

enhanced its collection development to pinpoint the needs of Queens neighborhoods and their ever-changing population. Now in the 21st century, every branch has computers with Internet, free wi-fi, coupled with amazing programs, outstanding collections and exceptional caring and dedicated employees who provide excellent customer service.

Since the inception of the Queens Library, library staff has attempted to meet the demands of every neighborhood in Queens with limited budgets. As this report documents, the people of Queens need library services. However, the repeated budget cuts since 2008 have placed an immense strain on the staff. The Queens Library has lost over 190 public service staff — librarians, clerical workers, custodians and computer service technicians. The remaining staff struggles to keep the branch libraries open and meet the needs of library customers.

As the report points out, a budget must be created that allows libraries to meet the needs of their customers. Throughout its history, the Queens Library has done an admirable job serving the public. To address the needs discussed in the report, our politicians must provide additional funding to public libraries on a consistent basis. We hope our politicians take this report to heart.

## Local 1321 Testimony at City Hall

*The following testimony was presented by Local 1321 President John Hyslop at a March 8, 2013, hearing on the Mayor's Preliminary Budget for FY 2014 held by the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations and SubCommittee on Libraries.*

**I**wish that at one of your preliminary budget hearings, I could tell you how invigorating the coming year's budget will be to library services, the staff and public. Unfortunately, I cannot. Once again the Mayor proposes a preliminary budget that drastically cuts the libraries' budgets, leaving the libraries scrambling to figure out how they are going to operate and adds more anxiety and anger to an already demoralized staff.

You probably do not remember, but I said this last year and unfortunately, I am saying it again because the Mayor's Preliminary Budget follows his four year financial plan and proposes a \$29.5 million cut to the Queens Library and \$102 million cut to all three library systems. We know that the City Council cares about libraries and will restore most of the proposed cut, as they have done every year. I am confident that the next mayor will have different financial priorities. Maybe not next year and maybe not in the next four years, but I guarantee that I or my successors will be back in front of the City Council begging for budget restorations because this budget process for libraries is broken.

I make this prediction based on very real experience. Almost every winter for the past ten years, the Mayor has proposed a budget that is drastically less than what the libraries actually received in the prior fiscal year. Every spring, library staff

waste extremely limited resources advocating and planning for an unknown future, worrying about library services and our careers. Finally, the budget is passed and, thanks to the City Council, much of the proposed cut is restored. However, not all of the budget is restored and in the end, the Mayor gets what he wants — a cut to the libraries' budgets.

I want to say, Local 1321 members are angry, angry that we are stuck in the middle of this budget process of proposed budget cuts, threats of layoffs and eventually budget restorations. We are fortunate to have City Council members who understand our value and support us. However, we are still angry.

Therefore, District Council 37 and Locals 374, 1321, 1482 and 1930 are compelled to take the bold action of proposing legislation that guarantees consistent and adequate funding of libraries year to year. This legislation will allow the three systems' staff to provide all the services our customers expect; to plan for new and innovative library services; to ensure our customers have a vast array of materials, programs and services; to feel secure in their profession.

In the FY 2008 budget and four year Financial Plan, everyone was told library funding was baselined and libraries would have the necessary funding to provide a minimum of

*(Continued on pg. 9)*

## Local 1321 in Action!

**I**N January 2012, Mayor Bloomberg proposed another drastic cut to the Queens Library's budget. By February, many of us were having that depressing, morale killing layoff conversation. The new wrinkle for all of us was apathy: "Again? Another cut? Why bother?" Apathy, however, did not rule the day! By March, Local 1321 members were gearing up for budget advocacy season. We reawakened the Local's Budget Action Committee. We encouraged branch staff to have events. We worked with Urban Librarians Unite (ULU) and the library's administration to ensure NYC was blanketed with library advocacy. With assistance from DC 37, we contacted our elected officials. By May, our campaign was in full swing — rallies, marches and events throughout the borough; testimonials at City Council hearings; and meetings with our elected officials. By June, through the cooperation of the library's administration, ULU, DC 37 and the members of Local 1321, we succeeded in convincing our elected officials to fund libraries, allowing us to continue to provide our excellent services and avoid layoffs.

Also in January, Local 1321's Leadership asked for the Library Trustees' meeting minutes from 2008 to present and ongoing. The administration refused our request. We consulted with DC 37's General Counsel, and the Legal Dept. assisted us with developing a legal strategy for obtaining them. Again, in March, May and June we asked for the minutes, and again the administration denied our request. Fed up with the administration's obstinacy, Local 1321 members filed a lawsuit to obtain the minutes. Within a week, the administration settled, delivering the minutes. They are now on our website, [www.local1321.org](http://www.local1321.org).

In May, after an agreement with the Department of Sanitation (DSNY) and the administration, the DSNY placed recycle bins in front of numerous branches and the library Custodians at those branches were given the responsibility of maintaining them. This additional work was given to the library custodians even though the system is

down over thirty custodians and they barely have enough time to clean their own branch. In October, the Union's leadership filed a Union grievance stating that this was out-of-title work. The administration agreed with the Union and DSNY removed the bins.

In June, on behalf of an Adult Literacy Assistant Manager who had been doing the Manager's position for five months, Local 1321 filed an out-of-title grievance. The Administration agreed with the Assistant Manager and granted her the salary of Manager until the Manager returned to work.

In August, a Junior Library Custodian was given a 20-day transfer to a branch that requires an Assistant Library Custodian. The custodian filed an out-of-title grievance. The Union's leadership successfully argued the case, convincing the library's administration to honor the grievance and pay the custodian the difference between the Junior Library

Custodian and Assistant Library Custodian salary.

In October, the Queens Library experienced its worst disaster in history after Superstorm Sandy destroyed the Seaside, Peninsula, Arverne, Broad Channel and Howard Beach branches, left many branches without power, dis-

placed a number of Queens Library employees, damaged many members' properties, caused many of us to lose power and disrupted our personal and work lives. Everyone in the system stepped up to help each other and our community. Two days after the storm, the custodial staff began the exhausting task of cleaning out the damaged branches.

*(Continued on pg. 8)*

***"All of us in our Union have stepped up and fought to protect our rights and most importantly we avoided layoffs. In 2012, our collective actions ensured that Queens Library's staff continues to provide excellent customer service in difficult times. We continued to have an incredibly positive impact on our community, customers, friends, neighbors and co-workers".***





## Life Goes on at the Book Mobile

by Kacper Jarecki



Seaside Library after Superstorm Sandy.

**C**HARLES DICKENS once wrote: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.” I feel the same way about working on the Queen Library Book Mobile! It was the best of times because I get to play Scrabble, pet a lot of dogs who pass by on the street, hang out with such amazing co-workers, and of course, I get to help customers. It was the worst of times because I saw so much destruction of houses, cars and people’s lives, not to mention destruction of libraries, including my own!

After becoming Manager of Seaside for less than five months, my library got totaled! As Manager I always want to protect my library and my community, so I felt bad that I couldn’t do anything to stop Sandy. Later I found out that I wouldn’t be going back to Seaside anytime soon; instead I would be working at the Book Mobile in front of the Peninsula Library, which also got damaged!

Riding on my motorcycle to work with my license plate that says “PAIN” I felt really bad to see all the damaged buildings and wrecked cars. There also was sand e-v-e-r-y-w-h-e-r-e! When I came back home that day, there even was sand in my underwear! I arrived at my location in front of Peninsula for the first time and there were wet books and DVDs and mud all over the sidewalk! Peninsula Library got hit especially hard because the glass from their window shattered and the furniture and all the books at one

point were just floating around during the flooding. And did I mention about the sand? Every time a car passed by a cloud of sand appeared! You could barely breathe with all that.

Customers were shocked, and dazed, and confused. One customer said that you see this type of destruction in movies and on the news all the time, but you never think it will happen to you! It was an educational experience for all of us! In the beginning, customers flocked to the Book Mobile to stay warm and to charge their phones. They lost their homes, electricity, and power! And the weather was cold. Customers also wanted to know where they could go to get help like FEMA aid, or even just a place to take a hot shower.

Later people came to the Book Mobile to learn about getting their lives back to normal. They asked about when and where their kids could go to school, they asked about job opportunities so that they could earn money to rebuild, they asked about voting sites so that they could vote to make a difference!

On the Book Mobile, we also provided friendly ears, and customers told us their stories of woe and sadness, of seeing someone drown, of seeing their life savings

disappear, of losing their pet cat!!! Customers were thankful to see the library was here, that the library didn’t pack up and leave so that they could still have somewhere to return their overdue books.

As you know, Hurricane Sandy received a lot of attention and a lot of politicians and reporters came over to see what’s up. It was gratifying to get help from other colleagues and agencies, and we still keep getting book donations and stuff from our friends in Queens Library. President John Hyslop also came over and continues to support us. When Bloomberg passed by, people were shouting at him because they were mad, but deep down everyone is nice and helpful, and I get to see that in action everyday!

Now things have kind of settled back to a type of normalcy. The Book Mobile no longer needs to provide emergency services like we used to. Most people got their power back or moved to somewhere with power or heat. Now we mostly distribute free books to the community so that people can start rebuilding their lives one book at a time! I also get to play Chess or Scrabble and do mini-programs on the Book Mobile, but I miss my Ping Pong Club from Seaside!!! People

## Storm Relief for Local 1321 Members

**A**S all of us know, thousands of people in our region were severely affected by Superstorm Sandy and the nor’easter a few days later. Local 1321 members were no exception. We lost power for a long time. Our property was destroyed. Our lives were in turmoil.

To provide some assistance to Local 1321 members, Local 1321’s Executive Board created three special benevolences for members who were affected by the storm. The first two were created just after the storm. As time progressed and FEMA aid was distributed, we learned that not everyone who had significant damage to their property received FEMA assistance and they were entitled to other Federal assistance. Therefore, we created the third special benevolence. All of them were approved by the General Membership at the November 2012 and January 2013 General Membership meetings.

**1.** Local 1321 will provide a special benevolence of \$200 to any Local 1321 member who received FEMA assistance. Members must provide a copy of the FEMA

approval paperwork to receive the benevolence. Recipients must complete a Local 1321 voucher.

**2.** Local 1321 will provide a special benevolence of \$50 to any Local 1321 member who has lost power for more than seven days since the storm Sandy. Recipients must complete a Local 1321 voucher.

**3.** Local 1321 will provide a special benevolence of \$200 to any Local 1321 member who received Federal Government assistance from damage caused by Superstorm Sandy. Members must provide a copy of their paperwork stating they received Federal Government assistance. Members must complete a Local 1321 voucher.

The vouchers are available at [www.local1321.org](http://www.local1321.org). Please submit all the paperwork to the Local’s office at the Woodside branch, [local1321@gmail.com](mailto:local1321@gmail.com) or fax at 718-779-0788.

These storms were devastating. We hope that these funds help.

are also getting letters for their overdue books so we rush to waive all those fees related to Sandy so that our customers can be happy. People also use our computer to check their e-mail or go on Facebook so that they can communicate with their family and friends.

We’ve had our unique share of adventures as well. A sparrow flew into the Book Mobile twice! One time I was actually trying to shoo the sparrow away but I think she liked me because she flew right in! Then I went to the police and they helped to take the sparrow away in a box to freedom! I did give the sparrow some bread in her box so that she could have a Merry Christmas. A librarian from Hempstead dropped off some toys so that we can give them away to the kids. Everyone tries to help in their own way and that’s real heart-warming! And I still have the feather from the sparrow so I can remember what a pretty sparrow she is and how it’s our love for each other that gives us wings to fly free no matter what tragedies may befall us and no matter how much senseless and pointless destruction surrounds us!

Acknowledgements: I would like to acknowledge my mother and father, and also all the amazing staff from Queens Library who are too many to count on my hands! Special thanks to John Hyslop, Local 1321 President, Matthew Allison and Laura Rodriguez, my everyday co-workers on the Book Mobile! Thanks to customers for keeping me busy.



## Another year without a contract!

**I**N March 2010 our economic contract expired. That same year, contracts for Police, Fire, Sanitation, Teachers and every other Unionized city worker expired. Since then, the Mayor has either refused to bargain with his employees or proposed demands that are so onerous that no one in their right mind would accept. None of the city's Unionized employees have received a raise since 2010.

DC 37 and the city have held two negotiating sessions and at both of them the city proposed almost the same contract New York State public employees received: a severe five-year contract with the first three years of 0% raises and the last two years of 1.4% raises. This is totally unacceptable.

DC 37 has consistently countered this atrocious demand with the following rational arguments:

- **Inflation:** Since March of 2009, the last time we had a wage increase, the Consumer Price Index rose by 7.9%. We need a raise to keep up.
- **Productivity:** Over the past few years, every city agency has lost employees through attrition and layoffs. We are more productive because we do more work with a lot less. This includes, as we know, the library.

- **Overtime:** The city spent \$1.2 billion on overtime in FY 2012. Managing this overtime better could save the city a lot of money.

- **Privatization:** The city spends billions of dollars a year paying private contractors for work that was done by city employees. Many of these contracts have cost of living increases in them, while we have not had a raise in 3.5 years.

- **Revenue-generating ideas:** DC 37 provided the city with many recommendations to raise revenue, including the hiring of additional tax auditors that the city estimates will increase revenue by \$350 million between FY '12 and FY '14.

- **Comparability:** NYS public employees are not comparable to NYC public employees because they have a cost of living increase built into their contract. NYC employees do not.

The Mayor needs to compromise and meet DC 37 and the other city Unions halfway. He needs to acknowledge our hard work and productivity. Otherwise, we fall farther and farther behind and the next Mayor is going to be faced with the incredibly daunting task of bargaining contracts with the city workforce.

## Local 1321 in Action! *(continued from page 5)*

Four days after the storm, staff volunteered to work at Peninsula's books bus.

Also that day, the Local's Leadership approved the purchase of \$600 worth of supplies and delivered them to people in the most affected Queens communities. Five days after the storm, Far Rockaway staff set their branch up as a distribution center for food and necessities. At November's General Membership Meeting the membership voted to create a special benevolence for people who received FEMA assistance and/or lost power for more than seven days. At our January 2013 General Membership Meeting, we approved an additional benevolence for people who received federal assistance. As of this writing, Local 1321 has provided \$3,700 worth of special benevolences.

In November, a Local 1321 member filed a grievance because the administration advertised a promotional opportunity without honoring an employee's long-standing transfer.

The administration honored her transfer because, according to a number of arbitration decisions, the

transfer list must be exhausted before promotional opportunities are granted.

All of these successes are overshadowed by another year of doing more with a lot less. Everyone is struggling to provide the customer service our customers expect. The Mayor refuses to acknowledge this impressive productivity by continuing to cut the library's budget and not negotiating for an economic contract. The administration refuses to cut hours to accommodate the loss of over 190 public service staff. They disregard our hard work, professionalism and commitment to our community by imposing massive involuntarily transfers. These factors have affected morale and are discouraging.

That said, all of us in our Union have stepped up and fought to protect our rights and most importantly we avoided layoffs. In 2012, our collective actions ensured that Queens Library's staff continues to provide excellent customer service in difficult times. We continued to have an incredibly positive impact on our community, customers, friends, neighbors and co-workers.

## Dues increase of \$.15 per paycheck

**I**N a letter dated October 19, 2012, AFSCME's Secretary-Treasurer Laura Reyes informed AFSCME's District Councils and Locals that effective January 1, 2013 membership dues will increase by \$0.30 per month. Since we are paid bi-weekly, the total per paycheck will be rounded to \$0.15.

AFSCME's constitution Article IX Subordinate Bodies, found here <http://www.afscme.org/news/publications/afscme-governance/afscme-constitution>, explains how dues increases are calculated. Section 6 of this Article determines if an increase should happen: "The dues of each local union shall be adjusted annually in accordance with the average percentage increase in pay of AFSCME members..." If AFSCME's members did not get an increase in the 12-month period ending July 1, then dues will not be increased in the coming calendar year. If AFSCME members did get an increase in that 12-month period, then dues will be increased.

**Section 7** of the same article explains how the increase is computed: "Each subordinate body shall submit a copy of any collective bargaining agreements, memoranda of understanding or other agreements affecting the wages of its members to the International Secretary-Treasurer within thirty days after their ratification..."

**Furthermore:** "From the above document and reports, the International Secretary-Treasurer shall determine, by September 30 of each year, the average percentage increase in pay received by AFSCME's members...Upon completion of this calculation, the International Secretary-Treasurer shall cause it to be

audited by an independent certified public accountant not otherwise connected with AFSCME...Such audit shall certify the accuracy of the International Secretary-Treasurer's calculation...Upon receipt of such certification, the International Secretary-Treasurer shall notify the International Executive Board and each subordinate body of the resulting adjustment in dues and per capita tax required to be implemented..."

The audited calculation of AFSCME member pay increases for a dues increase determined that our dues will increase \$0.30 per month, \$0.15 per paycheck.

As a reminder, our dues go towards many benefits, including:

- DC 37 Representatives who advocate for us and file grievances on our behalf;
- DC 37 Lawyers, who recently helped us file a lawsuit against the administration to obtain the Library Trustees' minutes;
- DC 37 Negotiators who are working to get us a new contract;
- The Help Our Own Fund and Personal Service Unit to help us in times of financial and emotional need;
- AFSCME and DC 37 to advocate on our behalf nationally and locally on issues affecting government workers;
- The Local's telephone bills and Internet service so members can keep in contact with their representatives and;
- The Local's newsletter and other communication tools. Thank you for your understanding.

## Local 1321 Testimony at City Hall *(continued from page 4)*

six day service. All three library systems hired hundreds of librarians, clerks and custodians to meet this goal.

The very next year, the Mayor's four year Financial Plan cut our budgets and every year since then he has proposed budget cuts. Granted, this country had just begun the Great Recession, but in all the years since 2008, the Mayor's proposed cut never materialized because the City Council provided the restorations.

The Center for an Urban Future's recent report, "Branches of Opportunity," is a must read for every New York City resident. It documents the positive impact libraries have on all of us, and reinforces what library workers have been saying for years: library workers provide more and more essential services to every New York City resident. However, library budgets continue to be inconsistent and underfunded. I quote from the report:

"Despite record attendance and circulation numbers, and a dramatically expanded list of programs and resources, New York City libraries face a number of serious challenges to their continued success and number one, without a doubt,

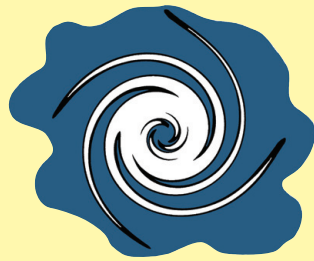
is funding. All three library systems have experienced funding cuts totaling tens of millions of dollars in recent years, but cuts aren't their only financial obstacle. In many ways, the lack of security afforded by the city's budget process has been at least as big a problem.

Furthermore: "...the revenue sources both parties agree upon in order to provide library funding are guaranteed for only one year. The discrepancy between the libraries' ostensible budget as seen in the Financial Plan and their actual budget has tended to not only continue from year to year but widen even further."

Let us stop this seesaw budget dance. Every library supporter, every library staff member, every politician that cares about their libraries must stand up and say we need our libraries fully funded with a consistent budget every year. It is time for a budget that consistently allows every Local 374, 1321, 1482 and 1930 member to provide the excellent services our customers demand. It is time for real budget reform that protects all library services and staff. It is time for baseline funding legislation!

## Local 1321 Members in the News

*Local 1321's Newsletter is starting a new feature highlighting the amazing work Local 1321 members do at work and outside work. If you know of a member who appears in the news or we missed someone in this article, let us know by emailing [local1321@gmail.com](mailto:local1321@gmail.com)!*



### Sandy Relief Efforts in the Media

We help people everyday in our work lives. Hurricane Sandy was a tragic event that affected many of us, and a few Local 1321 members made special efforts to provide assistance and comfort to those affected. Here are a few accounts of those efforts that made the news. The library acted as a refuge immediately after the storm and as a place where the library is treated as a member of the family in their community. It is great to know that we were able to help and that we will never lose our importance.

### New York Daily News November 3, 2012:

The New York Daily News has an article about the Far Rockaway Community Library's efforts to provide assistance to the community. Sharon Anderson, CLM, discusses how she worked with community groups and the library's administration to set up relief efforts.

**Public Employee  
PRESS**

### January 2013, NY1 November 13, 2012, and other sources:

Sharon Anderson, CLM at Far Rockaway, appeared in the Public Employee Press. She said her branch provided food, clothes, and other essential items for the community. Over 1,500 coats were donated and distributed to keep residents warm. After working about a week during the daylight hours, a generator was donated so the branch could offer more hours of assistance and function better to assist people. Customers also went to the library seeking warmth, solace, and support. She said the community depends on her library for everything including finding jobs and homes, so it wasn't that much of a stretch for residents in the community to search out the library in times of desperate need. The community came together at Far Rock and Anderson, and her staff were there to help.

Matt Allison (Peninsula CLM), Kacper Jarecki (Seaside CLM and 1321 VP Librarians) and Laura Rodriguez (Seaside CSR) were reassigned to work as staff at the bookmobile outside the Peninsula branch, which was severely damaged and all of its contents were destroyed. "The bus has been very important from the beginning," said Kacper. Allison said the library served as a refuge for people whose homes lost heat, hot water and electricity. Rodriguez, who also lives in the area, was forced to live with relatives after her home lost heat and power. At the bookmobile, withdrawn books were collected and distributed to customers looking for something to read and it was much appreciated. Initially, according to Allison, it was important to provide information on where to get help (such as applying for emergency housing and FEMA grants) and to charge phones.

### City Journal Winter 2013:

In an article about New York City institutions that performed admirably after the storm, Sharon Anderson appears again in the press, discussing the branch's efforts assisting members of the community after the storm.

*(Continued on pg. 11)*

## Local 1321 members in the news *(continued from page 10)*



### Channel 4 News, January 7, 2013:

On NBC New York News, Nicole Gordon, Arverne CLM, said water went up to about six feet and the recently renovated branch lost everything. She said the library was very important to open as it helped customers charge their phones and provided access to the computers so they can contact FEMA. The community was without power for three weeks.

### Social Media, various dates:

It sounds like a cliché, but Facebook kept many connected and informed. Members were able to provide useful information to each other on whether the branches were open and what the situation was like.

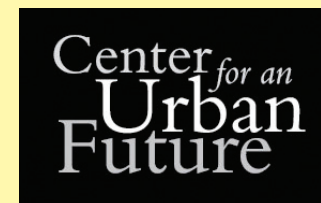
Several members made their way to staff the Book Mobile during the Sundays right after Sandy in order to help the community including John Hyslop, Allison McKenna, Meghan Cirrito, Christian Zabriskie (who was featured in a photo reading to kids), Justin Levinson, Matt Allison, Logan Ragsdale, Kacper Jarecki, Anne Marie Clarke, Anne Bagnall and Danielle Gifford.

Custodial staff helped clean the area around the Peninsula branch. The sidewalks were covered in three inches of hardened sand and was said to be as heavy as shoveling concrete. Maintainers also stopped by the branches to assess the damage. Of those who could make it to our jobs, we worked hard (with the higher than normal traffic at some branches) despite traveling long distances and commuting snafus to get to our branches during the storm.



### Other media coverage

### Center for an Urban Future, Branches of Opportunity, January 2013:



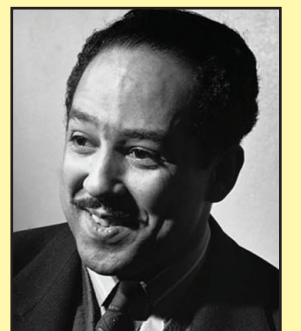
A number of Local 1321 members were interviewed for the Center for an Urban Future's report Branches of Opportunity. Katherine Perry, former Library Literacy Specialist, Flushing Adult Learner Program, and Marco Castillo, former Library Literacy Manager, Long Island City Adult Learner Program, talked about how important the Library's adult literacy programs are to the community. Susan Miller, Young Adult Librarian, formerly of Flushing Community Library, discussed Flushing's busy teen room.

### New York Times, January 8, 2013:

Vilma Daza, CLM, Corona Community Library, is in the photograph accompanying their article about the Center for an Urban Future's Report Branches of Opportunity.

### Queens Chronicle, January 13, 2013, "Langston Hughes Library Recognized"

The Langston Hughes Community and Cultural Center Library is being recognized by the United for Libraries' 28th Annual Langston Hughes Celebration. Congratulations to the Langston Hughes staff!





# Budget Action Committee

**L**OCAL 1321's Executive Board has voted to reconvene the Local's Budget Action Committee (BAC). The Local's Executive Board decided that if we do not participate in New York City's budget process, libraries could very well suffer. That said, the Executive Board is not naive. We know that most Local 1321 members are cynical and apathetic about fighting for budget restorations. However, if you care about a public library's mission, or, at the very least, your salary and benefits, you will volunteer to make a difference.

For the tenth year in a row, the Mayor has proposed a budget that is significantly lower than what we received the year before. For the fourth year in a row, the Mayor has given the City Council more responsibility for funding city services with a lot less money. Therefore, library advocates must work hard to convince our elected officials to restore these cuts.

In 2011, the Mayor proposed another budget cut. In reaction to this proposal and the prior year's layoffs, the Local formed its Budget Action Committee. This first year we were excited, advocating with energy, holding events throughout the system. The politicians heard us and restored most of our budget. The Administration "re-deployed" hundreds of staff and barely changed our hours. Staff were deflated.

In 2012, the Mayor proposed another budget cut and again the Local re-formed its BAC. However, this time

staff were less motivated. We advocated last year and saved library services and our jobs, but our work lives were uprooted and we were given more work with less staff. Nonetheless, we still came out again to advocate. All over the system we held rallies and events. Our elected officials listened and gave us a budget that avoided layoffs. In turn, the Administration involuntarily transferred hundreds of staff, barely reduced hours, changed the hours to a very inconvenient 11-7, and continued a public service staff hiring freeze. This winnowed away our morale even more.

In 2013, the Mayor proposed another budget cut. I have spoken to many of you throughout the system about our budget situation and I agree, we are all tired of proposed budget cuts, budget advocacy, budget restorations, and finally the administration's disruption of our work life, professionalism and community. However, our cynicism cannot translate into inaction. We cannot sit idly by and let others decide our fate. If we do, our concern will not be the hours we work. Our concerns will be how are we going to pay our rent, how are we going to pay the doctor's bill, how are we going to find a job, because layoffs could very well happen. Let's stand up again. Let's stand up and tell our elected officials no more cuts, save our libraries!

To volunteer for the Budget Action Committee contact [local1321@gmail.com](mailto:local1321@gmail.com) or 718-779-0787.