



Dear Library Friends and Supporters;

Thanks for your patience and support of your library staff during this time of budgetary stalemates. The recent passage by state legislation of a 1% increase to the city's sales tax and the temporary suspension of the city's pension fund payments allows the budget passed by Philadelphia City Council, and signed by Mayor Nutter in May, to go into effect. While the Mayor's dreaded Plan C is dead and all library branches will remain open, a big victory after our hard fought battle for a "shared sacrifice" agenda instead of the permanent closure of 11 branches, at a \$33 million allocation the library is still operating with a 20% reduction and 100 less staff positions.

As you may have heard from your librarians, on October 5<sup>th</sup> a new 5 day service schedule takes effect. The library administration has worked diligently this past summer to devise a user (and Friends) friendly pairing and staffing plan that enables each branch to open on a regular 5 day per week schedule with two accredited librarians and support staff. This pairing and the re-deployment of some staff will hopefully minimize incidences of unscheduled closures due to shortages. We appreciate the understanding of those of you who are losing your beloved librarian to another neighborhood and offer our support during this time of transition.

Here's how the new schedule works:

- Half of the branches will be open from Tuesday through Saturday and half will be open from Monday through Friday. See the attachment for your branch and its pairing.
- LEAP afterschool homework help program for all school children in the afternoons will be available at all libraries, including on Saturdays at those branches that have corresponding service hours.
- 3 Regional Libraries (Blackwell, Coleman, Northeast) will open Tuesday through Saturday.
- Evening service at all branches shifts to Tuesdays and Wednesdays. There is a slight variation on evening service hours per branch (12-8, 11-7, etc.) so ask your librarian.
- Due to lower than average evening usage, this next year, C.B. Moore, McPherson Square, Kensington, and Widener branches will continue to close at 6 pm daily.

Signs will be posted at your library indicating the new service hours.

Don't relax yet. There is one more thing. Details of line item spending in the state budget are still being worked out in Harrisburg. State Aid to Libraries, which funnels \$10 million to our library system, is still in peril. There are proposals to slash it by anywhere from 35% to 50%. This money goes to books, DVDs, periodicals, databases and other materials that you rely on when visiting your branch. Please pick up the phone and call your state representative and Rep. Dwight Evans, Governor Rendell and Secretary of Education Gerald Zahorchak requesting that they level fund State Aid to Libraries at last year's allocation of \$75 million. It's imperative for our kids, seniors, students, job seekers, those lacking computers or internet connectivity, the blind and physically challenged, as well as pleasure readers or movie watchers to keep these resources available and this funding stable.

Lastly, I want to get on your calendar for an Alliance of Friends meeting on Saturday, January 30<sup>th</sup>. Details and the agenda are still being worked out. As always, we thank you for your hard work on behalf of your library and the entire system and look forward to seeing you at meetings or hearing from you with questions or concerns.

Best Wishes,

Amy Dougherty  
Executive Director

(See reverse for Legislators' contact information.)