

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

Minutes of the Meeting of the **Libraries & Cultural Affairs Committee**
Held at the NYPL Jerome Park Branch library on March 24, 2011

Present

Robert G. Abbott
Bill Stone
Martin Wolpoff
Jane Fisher
Liana Acevedo
Bridget Maybury
Judy Steever

Affiliation

CB#8, Committee Chair
CB#8
CB#8
NYPL, Network Manager
NYPL, Library Manager
Veterans Administration Medical Center (V.A.M.C.)
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The meeting began at 6:00 pm.

JEROME PARK BRANCH

The Library Manager, Liana Acevedo, gave a tour of the branch facilities. It was noted, during the tour, that:

- There are well designed and delineated areas for adults, teens, and children.
- There are dedicated computers for adults/teens (10) and a separate area for children with their own computer workstations (7). Computer training for adults occurs twice a week. Several of the “graduates” of the program have gone on to buy their own laptops.
- ESL classes are given regularly. A volunteer also provides weekly tutoring for individuals pursuing a G.E.D.
- Almost half of the space is devoted to the children’s collection and services. They have a very active after-school program with lots of kids participating.
- The Library Manager also described a very popular weekly cooking program for the teens.

More details about branch activities are provided in the attachment to these minutes.

DISCUSSION - The James J. Peters Veterans Administration Medical Center

Ms. Judy Steever, Chief Librarian at the V.A.M. C., described the program that was jointly initiated in February 2010 by the Jerome Park branch of the NYPL and the JJP Library of the medical center for the Community Living Center (CLC) at the center. (Bridget Maybury, former member of this committee and Community Board 8, was the catalyst bringing the two organizations together.) The program, called “Exploring Cultures” entails the visits of the branch librarian once or twice a month to the CLC to lead discussions on various topics, jointly

selected, that are of interest to the residents. The most recent session involved the history of jazz. Books, audio and video material are used in the program.

Based on the very positive experience of the last year with the program, it is the plan of Ms. Maybury and Ms. Steever to attempt to evaluate the impact of the program on the participants. The metrics for the evaluation are being developed. If they can document that the program has had a qualitative benefit, which they feel strongly that it has, they will submit the program for a VA Systems Redesign award. If it is chosen to receive an award, it could ultimately become a "Best Practice" for others to mirror.

The committee appreciated the initiative and the leadership provided by Ms. Steever and Ms. Acevedo. Their individual commitment and enthusiasm has been the foundation for the success thus far. The committee hopes that this is a sustainable outreach for the branch and looks forward to seeing the evaluation results.

Budget Priorities

Reviewed the feedback on 2012 capital and expense priorities. The two capital projects were endorsed by the NYPL and are dependent on the identification of funds.

The capital projects (major renovation of the Spuyten Duyvil branch and expansion or a new site for the Van Cortlandt Park branch) will continue to be priorities for the 2013 budget.

Proposed Forum

Ms. Fisher and Mr. Abbott reported that the proposed Forum has taken a slightly different turn. Rather than have one or more presentations at the branch libraries, we have scheduled a presentation to the full community board at its meeting on May 10th, 2011. The presentation will begin at 7:00 and will conclude when the regular meeting is called to order at 7:30. The objective of the presentation is to inform the community of future plans for the NYPL branches. It is still anticipated that the Kingsbridge branch will open sometime in May but the specific date is not yet announced.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Robert G. Abbott, Chairman
Libraries & Cultural Affairs Committee

Attached: Overview of the Branch

OVERVIEW OF THE BRANCH

The current Jerome Park Branch of The New York Public Library was built in 1968. The branch was completely renovated in 2006 and early 2007 and reopened in May, 2007.

Size: 7,404 square feet

The branch is a spacious, stone-clad building located on Eames Place, one block from the intersection of University Avenue and Kingsbridge Road. Fully accessible to persons who use wheelchairs, the one-story facility replaced a nearby storefront branch that began operation in 1957.

The Library Manager, since 2009, is Liana Acevedo. She started her career at NYPL as a Library Page in 1995, completed her undergraduate studies while working part-time for the Library and went on to earn an MLS from the Pratt Institute.

Library Use



Note that the decline in circulation and visitors at the Jerome Park Library corresponds with the unfortunate reduction in branch hours. Due to budget cuts, the hours of service at Jerome Park fell from 54/week to 46/week, nearly 15%.

Hours

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
12-8	10-6	10-6	10-6	10-5	10-5

Neighborhood Schools - District 10

Public

P.S. 86 Kingsbridge Heights School

P.S. 307 Eames Place School

P.S. 340

P.S. 360

The New School for Leadership and Journalism

Discovery High School

High School for Teaching and the Professions

The Marie Curie School for Medicine, Nursing and Health Professions

Kingsbridge International High School

International School for Liberal Arts

Private/Parochial: Our Lady of Angels School

College: Lehman College (CUNY)

Neighborhood Institutions / Organizations

The Jerome Park Library serves the local community, which is largely but not exclusively of Hispanic background. A large percentage of the visitors to the Jerome Park Branch are elementary and middle school students who come to the branch after school to complete the homework while awaiting their parents return from work. The children not only use the branch as an educational outlet, but also as an opportunity to socialize and learn from the programs offered.

Many of the adults that visit the Jerome Park branch are those that live within the community and visit to take advantage of the free computer services. While assisting many of the adult patrons, the library staff has found that many of them have suffered during this recession and are currently unemployed and searching for work. Resume building, job hunting, and free access to computers seem to be among the most pressing needs of adult patrons of the Jerome Park Library.

The staff continued to keep its current connections with the schools in the community, as well as with the hospitals and community organizations. The outreach program formed with the Bronx VA Hospital flourished throughout fiscal year 2010 and grows more interesting as it progresses. The connection with the Kingsbridge Heights Neighborhood Association also continues to thrive. Local schools such as P.S. 310, P.S. 86 and other schools in the area help spread the word of the Library's resources to new teachers and faculty. In fiscal year 2011 the branch will continue to build upon its current relationships with the schools, hospitals and community organizations. New connections are always in the works.