



SOS Ottawa Public Libraries – Save Our Services Presentation to City Council

by Lori Nash, President

December 3, 2007

My name is Lori Nash I am president of the Friends of the Ottawa Public Library Association which advocates and fundraises for the Ottawa Public Library.

- Thank you for your motion this morning not to proceed with budget cuts that would close community library branches in 2008.
- Thank you for listening to the response of the thousands of people in Ottawa who have sent postcards and emails in the Friends SOS Save our Services campaign.
- Thank you for responding to the month long campaign of desperation by citizens who fear the loss of one of the fundamentals to democracy....libraries providing an equal playing field in our knowledge based society for all
- The Friends of the Library distributed 15,000 SOS Postcards, across Ottawa...The postcard says SOS Save our Services No Budget Cuts and is a plea to prevent library budget cuts. The campaign did not just focus on closing library branches. We believed that branches were threatened and could be saved but that ANY cuts to the library budget would be devastating and needed city wide protest.
- And city-wide protest is what you've heard.
- The Friends have in just 21 days developed an extensive advocacy network including the Universities, Colleges, Friends representatives at all library branches, community representatives and media contacts through out the city...I am happy to say that the library now has more friends than ever. And together the library's friends continue to call on you to protect library funding and pass NO CUTS to the library budget.
- The Ottawa Public Library operates efficiently, offering high service levels at low cost. The Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative tells us that the Ottawa library's cost per use is already 10% below the mean for Ontario.
- But our library has been doing more with less for far too long. As budget cuts continue to erode our library services and facilities, they destroy Ottawa's foundation for success.

- The Library needs a promise for the future in Ottawa...we need to know that this city council believes in Library services as a core service ... essential to the knowledge based economy and an important component of the economic success of the city...We need the city to look at the library for the future with plans now for a New Central Library, plans for expansion for the growing areas such as the needed West District Library in Kanata and plans to upgrade and improve children's services and services to newcomers.
- The Library Board is made up of 25 per cent of council...one in four councillors are on the library board...one in two have been on the Library board... we must get a commitment from council on the future of the library rather than this year to year threat of our very ability to serve the basic needs of the city ...
- We need a special meeting of council to debate the future of the Ottawa Public Library...will this city support a growing and dynamic service that is needed , fundamental and loved by citizens or will it continue to cripple and starve the system on a year to year basis giving just enough to survive.
- Thank you for not closing our libraries...but it's not enough to simply stop branches from shutting their doors completely. The doors must be open when and where families need their library. And the doors must open onto well-staffed and well-stocked libraries in safe and structurally sound buildings.
- We need more books, more Internet terminals and more librarians because we need more of the opportunities they bring us. We can accept no more threats of closures, no more crumbling buildings and no more cuts.
- Our libraries need funding to stay open, accessible, safe and effective when our residents need and want them. And Ottawa residents clearly do need and want their libraries!
- We need a future for the Ottawa Public Library....we need a dream and hope that the city has a vision for our future
- The Main library is crumbling as we speakservices are stretched to the max...Please offer us a future for Library services in Ottawa. Please commit now to make NO more CUTS and to keep our libraries strong this year, next year, and every year.