

Southern Lehigh Public Library

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Center Valley PA 18034
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March 30, 2016

Southern Lehigh School District Board of Directors
5775 Main St.
Center Valley, PA 18034

Dear Directors,

On behalf of Southern Lehigh Public Library's Board of Directors, I thank you for your commitment of financial support in the amount of \$64,000 during fiscal year 2015/2016. This funding is used strictly for the regular operating expenses of the library and enables us to provide a suitable facility, trained staff, collection materials in many formats that residents may check out or use electronically, access to public computers, and educational programming for all ages.

Some of the highlights of the current 2015/2016 fiscal year are:

- Created a middle grade fiction section for students in grades 5-8 or students aged 10-14 years.
- Continued to provide a variety of adult programming towards the library's strategic plan goal of becoming a community center; programs included cycling, yoga, cooking, wellness, living history, author talks.
- Opened a *stress relief station* that includes adult coloring and puzzle pages plus a jigsaw puzzle that community residents can work on together.
- *One on One Tech Training* has become popular with older adults who desire to learn computer skills.
- Continued our partnership as a part of the Allentown District Libraries Consortium to provide more electronic reference databases for patrons; increased the number of downloadable e-books and e-audio books available and realized usage increases in triple digit percentages.
- Improved reader's advisory resources by creating genre pamphlets for adults.
- Participation by SLSD students in the library's Summer Reading Club increased by 30%.
- Increased programming for children that included sewing classes, *Money Matters* workshops, UMIGO math workshops, Baby Rembrandt (art) and Einstein Rocks (science) programs for preschoolers, seasonal craft and holiday programs.
- New partnerships with Allentown Symphony, Wildlands Conservancy, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts allowed more family programs.
- To support SLSD's Spanish Immersion program, library expanded its Spanish language collection for children/teens.
- Continued to specifically budget funds for the purchase of titles on SLSD's Required Summer Reading List; from May 1-September 30, 2015 there were 638 checkouts of titles from the MS Required Reading List and 511 checkouts of titles from the HS Required Reading List; this service saves SLSD and parents from having to purchase those books on their own.
- Continued to host an expanded AARP Tax Assistance program that included more volunteer tax preparers that were able to serve more local residents.
- Provided one additional day each month for a second trained APPRISE volunteer to assist seniors with choosing health benefits.

As the library continues to expand programming and services, it also faces several challenges for which additional local funding is needed:

- Increases in State Aid have been non-existent for the past several years with only 1.8% increase during the current FY; state funding has not kept pace with state-mandated services and expenditures.
- Library is under-staffed; more FT employees are needed, but funding is not adequate to provide required health insurance benefits; current staff is well-trained and experienced, but does not receive comparable wages jeopardizing retention of employees and attraction of new, qualified candidates.
- Budgeting for upgrades to technology is difficult; competition for grants is at an all-time high; demand for newer technologies has increased.
- As building ages, maintenance issues arise for which funding is inadequate; library is working to raise separate funds for capital projects.

As the Southern Lehigh School District's Board of Directors negotiates its budget for the 2016/2017 FY, please consider an increase of \$4,000 in support for Southern Lehigh Public Library to \$68,000. Your favorable reply will assist the library's Board of Directors and staff in meeting the challenges it faces while continuing to provide curriculum support and library services to Southern Lehigh School District students, faculty and staff.

Sincerely,
Lynnette A. Saeger
Librarian/Director