

# Bklyn Public Library

Start Here

*Strategic Plan Update*



Spring 2014



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**Key**

The color code below is used throughout this document to indicate the stage of progress of each initiative.



To view the original Strategic Plan, visit [bklynlibrary.org/about/every-brooklynite-can-start-here](http://bklynlibrary.org/about/every-brooklynite-can-start-here).



# INTRODUCTION



Linda E. Johnson



Nicholas A. Gravante, Jr.

Since publishing our strategic plan in January 2013, we have made great strides toward achieving our goals, which fall into six categories: Education, Access, Inclusion, Culture, Space and Stewardship. Some highlights of the past year include launching Brooklyn Public Library's (BPL) first Department of Outreach Services to improve service to immigrants, older adults and transitional populations; providing over 42,000 computer sessions in Central Library's new technology-rich Shelby White and Leon Levy Information Commons; launching a new tablet lending program; and nearly quadrupling the number of participating Brooklyn schools in the MyLibraryNYC program.

To build upon these successes and others, we have identified a number of new initiatives for the coming year. Chief among them are expanding our Summer Meals program to nearly half of our 60 locations, offering a new children's literacy program in low-income neighborhoods and increasing access to technology by growing our successful laptop loan program. Of course as we work toward accomplishing our objectives, we will also remain adaptable and responsive to unforeseeable needs and opportunities. In 2012/13, Hurricane Sandy was a powerful reminder that despite our plans, unanticipated events can force us to temporarily change course to address new challenges.

As we reflect on the past year, we are proud of the many ways we have strengthened our institution and the communities it serves. None of this critical work would have been possible without the countless people who support the Library, including our elected officials, Board of Trustees, donors, cultural partners, employees and volunteers. Thank you for your dedication to our cause.

Very truly,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Linda E. Johnson".

Linda E. Johnson  
President & CEO

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Nicholas A. Gravante, Jr.".

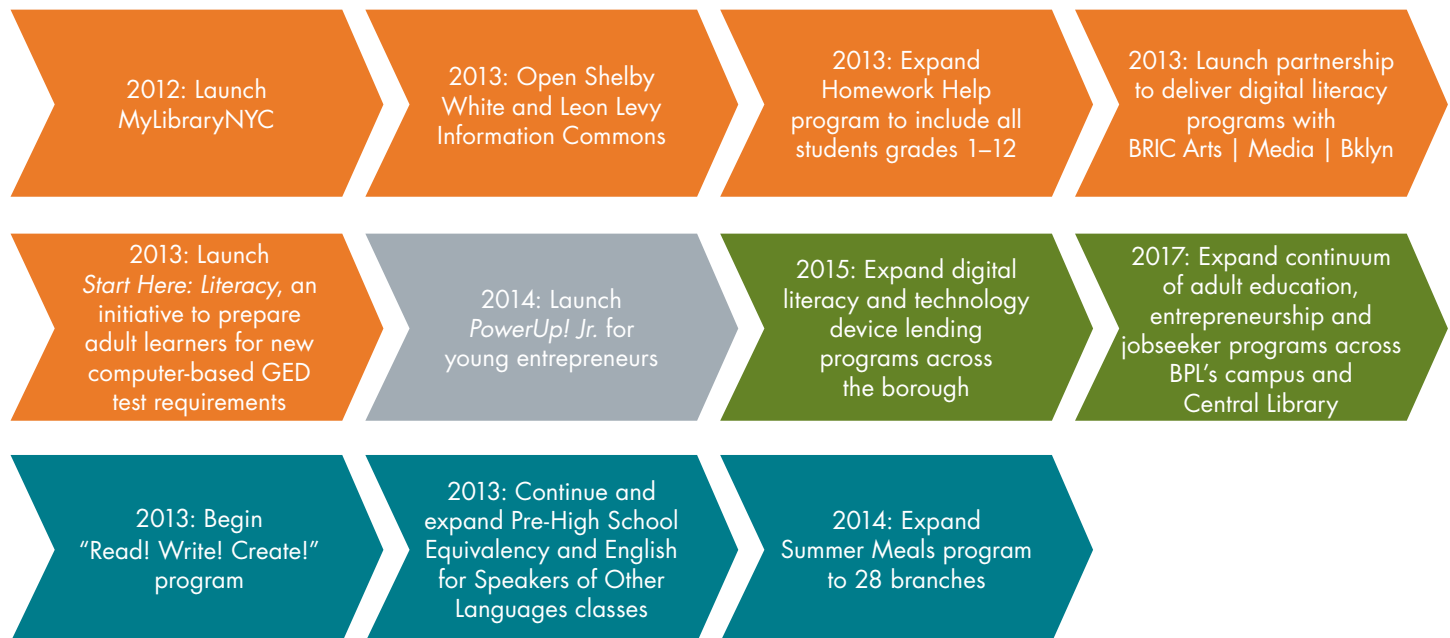
Nicholas A. Gravante, Jr.  
Chair, Board of Trustees

# EDUCATION



Promote early literacy, lifelong learning and civic participation

# OUR PROGRESS IN EDUCATION: 2013



## MyLibraryNYC

In 2012, BPL, New York Public Library, Queens Library and the NYC Department of Education collaborated on MyLibraryNYC, a program to increase library services for public school students and educators. Over the past fiscal year, the number of participating schools in MyLibraryNYC has nearly quadrupled, from 34 schools in 2013 to 133 in 2014. Additionally, in fall 2013, BPL trained over 1,400 school librarians and teachers, distributed special library cards that allow fine-free borrowing and delivered books directly to the schools, among other benefits. As of the end of December 2013, almost 50,000 books and other BPL materials have been circulated through MyLibraryNYC. The program has also increased the remote use of BPL's free databases; while only 6% of our active teachers, juveniles and young adult patrons are MyLibraryNYC patrons, 67% of all those who use BPL's databases during the school year are at MyLibraryNYC schools.

## Homework Help

Last fiscal year, BPL both increased its existing Homework Helper volunteer program and created a new High School Tutoring program to serve older students. The After-School Homework Helper program, which serves students in grades 1 through 8, expanded from 110 volunteers in 48 locations serving 17,600 patrons in Fiscal Year 2012 to 134 volunteers in 54 locations serving 21,000 patrons in FY 2013. Additionally, BPL placed 20 High School Tutors at 15 branches, who helped a total of 2,400 students. To supplement the high school tutoring program, BPL also conducted SAT and college preparation seminars. Between April 2013 to June 2013, seminars were piloted at 10 BPL locations. As of June 2013, approximately 100 students attended SAT/college preparation seminars. In FY 2014, BPL will expand the seminars to include 20 to 25 branches.

Key | ● Completed ● Delayed/Date Change ● On Track ● New



Children participating in the BCAP program at Central Library with their avatar creations. Photo © Erin Shaw

### ***BRIC Partnership***

In January 2013, BPL launched a partnership with the not-for-profit organization BRIC, a group that provides resources to launch, nurture and showcase artists and media makers. BRIC currently offers three weekly classes in media production and social media at Central Library's Shelby White and Leon Levy Information Commons. In the spring of 2013, we expanded our partnership to the Kings Highway and New Lots libraries, where BRIC now provides certification classes in field production and lends camera equipment to BRIC-certified producers. To date, over 1,100 students have attended more than 200 classes. Our partnership will continue to grow in 2014, when BRIC will begin offering classes out of the newly reopened Coney Island Library.

### ***Brooklyn Cultural Adventures Program***

In February 2013, BPL assumed leadership of the Brooklyn Cultural Adventures Program (BCAP), an award-winning summer day camp. BCAP is based on a unique partnership between six treasured cultural institutions in the heart of Brooklyn: BPL, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Prospect Park Audubon Center & Lefferts Historic House, Brooklyn Children's Museum, Brooklyn Museum and Prospect Park Zoo.

The camp takes advantage of these resources by offering thematically linked, hands-on experiences for kids ages 7 to 12 at each of the institutions. The program serves over 200 campers annually from across Brooklyn and beyond, and generous tuition assistance is offered to 50% of participants each year. In summer 2013, we served children from 38 zip codes and 78 schools. In 2014, thanks to the generous support of The Pinkerton Foundation, the program will pilot a new teen component, the BCAPteen Media Leadership project.

### ***Start Here: Literacy***

In April 2013, a team of BPL's Adult Learning library staff started meeting regularly to gather the most accurate and up-to-date information about the changes to the high school equivalency (HSE) exam, including the introduction of a new exam, the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC), which replaced the GED test in January 2014. In addition to disseminating an informative fact sheet about upcoming changes and providing public information sessions, the team also compiled informative web-based resources for the staff and the public. In FY 2014, students enrolled in BPL's Pre-HSE programs will have more access to technology within the classroom, access to online resources for

independent practice at home and will also receive ongoing individual support from trained staff in our programs and Learning Centers.

The work of the team will continue in FY 2014 as it drafts recommendations for the institution about how best to support and prepare patrons pursuing their HSE with materials and instruction based on the Common Core State Standards, digital literacy classes and by possibly offering practice tests or BPL locations as testing sites.

### ***Shelby White and Leon Levy Information Commons***

In January 2013, we successfully opened the Shelby White and Leon Levy Information Commons. This space includes 10 iMacs, 15 Hewlett-Packard PCs and a recording studio with an editing workstation for public use, plus laptops for use during classes. Since the Info Commons first opened, there have been over 10,000 unique wireless devices accessing the Central Library network. Its seven public meeting rooms have been reserved directly 4,600 times by BPL cardholders, resulting in 7,950 hours of usage by the public. Each month, the Info Commons hosts over 100 programs, in the meeting rooms as well as in the large lab.

### ***Tablet Lending Program***

In 2013, as part of a collaboration between Governor Andrew Cuomo, Google and The Fund for Public Schools, BPL received a donation of 1,000 Google Nexus 7 tablets. Beginning in the fall, BPL used these devices to launch a new tablet lending program at Coney Island, Brighton Beach, Gerritsen Beach, Red Hook and Sheepshead Bay libraries, some of the communities most impacted by Hurricane Sandy.

Patrons can use the tablets for job training, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes and as eReaders, and borrowers can personalize them by adding apps, music and other content. The tablets can be borrowed for two weeks at a time and renewed up to three times.

## **New Key Initiatives**

### ***“Read! Write! Create!”***

In September 2013, BPL was awarded a prestigious National Leadership grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to implement “Read! Write! Create!,” a literacy program focused on comic book creation. In partnership with the New York City Housing Authority and the Comic Book Project, the program will target families with children between the ages of five and nine who reside in three public housing developments and the surrounding low-income neighborhoods of Brownsville, Bushwick and Coney Island. “Read! Write! Create!” will reach a total of 600 children and their caregivers over two years through a series of drop-in workshops.

### ***Summer Meals***

To help fight child hunger while school is out of session, last summer BPL served free weekday lunches at six of its branches to children 18 years of age or younger. This summer, BPL is expanding the program to include 25 libraries throughout the borough. The Library receives the meals from the U.S. Department of Agriculture through the NYC Department of Education’s Office of School Food and Nutrition.

### ***Pre-High School Equivalency and English for Speakers of Other Languages Classes***

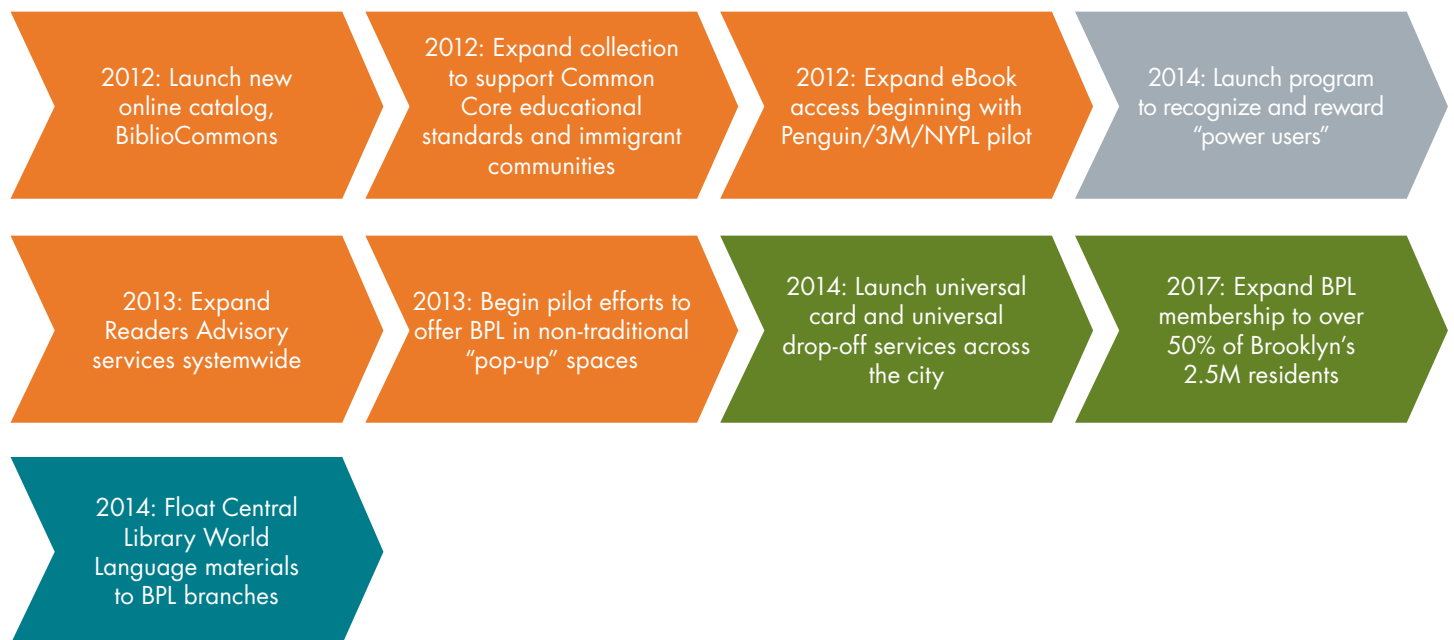
In 2013, BPL was awarded two Workforce Investment Act (WIA) grants from the New York State Education Department. The five-year grants will fund the continuation of BPL’s Pre-High School Equivalency (HSE) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, including expansion of ESOL classes to three new locations. The grants will also help build the capacity of the programs to offer better service to current participants, meet the more rigorous Common Core State Standards, integrate technology training and develop more extensive social support and workforce development services.

# ACCESS



**Improve access to Library resources and increase the number of active registered cardholders**

# OUR PROGRESS IN ACCESS: 2013



## ***Supporting the Common Core***

In 2012, BPL began a two-year project to expand our collections to support both the Common Core educational standards and immigrant communities, thanks to a generous grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. As of December 31, 2013, BPL has purchased nearly 3,000 titles, representing over 48,000 new books for our collection. BPL also acquired three online resources to support the Common Core roll-out: Scholastic's BookFlix and TrueFlix and Gale Cengage Learning's Opposing Viewpoints.

## ***Readers' Advisory***

In 2013, BPL's Office of Neighborhood Services spearheaded a training initiative to promote readers' advisory services. Two working group committees were formed—a Circulation Advisory Committee and a Collection and Readers' Advisory Committee—to identify best practices and training needs for both front-end customer service and readers' advisory, as well as behind-the-scenes collection maintenance.

A team of over 25 librarians with various subject and genre expertise have volunteered to pilot a virtual readers' advisory service where patrons submit an online form indicating their reading interests and receive a customized booklist. These booklists will also be shared with the public on our catalog using the BiblioCommons list feature.

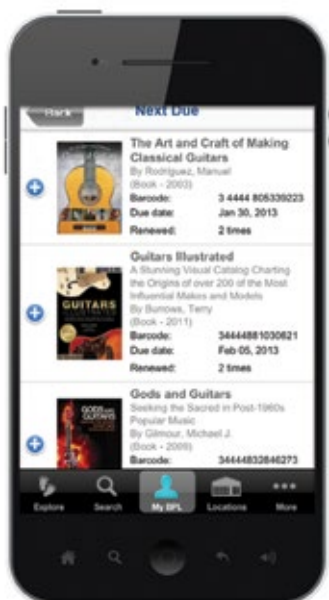
## Print and Digital Sales

In April 2013, BPL greatly expanded its digital offerings through a partnership with the book publisher Simon & Schuster. Patrons are now able to download Simon & Schuster eBooks from BPL's catalog, augmenting eBook sales from Random House, HarperCollins and other publishers with which BPL has established partnerships. When an eBook is already checked out, patrons have the option of purchasing it through BPL's catalog, with 2% of the sales benefitting the Library. Last November, BPL also launched a new feature enabling patrons to buy print books directly from the Library's catalog, with 10% of sales going to the Library.

## BiblioCommons

In 2012, the Library launched its new online discovery tool, BiblioCommons. As of December 2013, BPL has over 126,000 registered BiblioCommons users. These users have generated over 187,000 virtual "shelves" of materials they have read or are interested in reading, created over 2,000 booklists and more than 600 tags and rated 28,000 BPL materials.

Additionally, in February 2013, BPL launched a BiblioCommons mobile application to provide another avenue for patrons to connect with the BPL catalog. As of December 2013, there have been over 230,000 sessions and 14,193 iPhone® and 5,901 Android™ application downloads.



BPL launched a BiblioCommons mobile application in February 2012.

## The Uni Project

In 2013, BPL also began its efforts to offer library materials in non-traditional, pop-up spaces. With private funding, BPL acquired a "Uni" (portable library unit) from Street Labs, the non-profit that designed and manages the Uni Project. BPL led the effort to launch the pop-up as part of the Library Lawn established on Governors Island this past summer in partnership with New York Public Library, Queens Library and the Uni Project. This modular outdoor reading room offered books, activities and family programs for visitors, who were also able to register for library cards, sign up for Summer Reading and hear about upcoming events at each of the three library systems. Over the course of the summer, an estimated 7,500 people visited Library Lawn and over 600 people attended its youth and family programs.

BPL has also hired a small team of interns from Pratt Institute's School of Information and Library Science to assist with the deployment of the Uni pop-up library to Brooklyn homeless shelters. Starting in February 2014, the Uni will be stationed at select shelters for extended periods, allowing for greater access to library material for shelter residents. Our team of interns will visit the Uni shelter sites twice a week to replenish the collection and conduct programs on job readiness, early literacy and creative writing.

## New Key Initiative

### World Language Materials

In an effort to expand access to World Language materials, in early 2014 BPL will begin to float the entire 66,000-item World Language collection of Central Library's Languages & Literature Division to branches throughout the borough. Patrons may place holds on materials at any of BPL's 60 locations and have them sent directly to their branch. This initiative makes it possible for patrons who cannot visit Central Library to enjoy easy access to the Languages & Literature Division's vast array of materials.

(Opposite) A 'Uni' was a feature on the Library Lawn at Governors Island in summer 2013. Photo © The Uni Project



# CULTURE



Support creative expression, culture and the arts throughout Brooklyn

# OUR PROGRESS IN CULTURE: 2013



## Spaceworks

In 2012, BPL entered into an innovative partnership with Spaceworks, a newly formed 501(c)(3) tasked with creating affordable work space for local New York artists. Spaceworks will be providing capital funding to create artist studios at two BPL branches. Local artists will have access to high quality and affordable work space and will provide free programming for BPL patrons. In 2014, BPL and Spaceworks will begin fitting out the new artist spaces.

## Artist-in-Residence Program

BPL began its first artist-in-residence program in 2013. As part of her residency, architectural photographer Elizabeth Felicella received a solo exhibition in Central Library's Grand Lobby; an honorarium and a fee to cover some of her printing costs; full access to the Brooklyn Collection, the decks and various divisions at Central Library; and promotional support from the Brooklyn Collection and BPL's Marketing & Communications and Programs & Exhibitions departments. The Brooklyn Collection also sponsored an artist's talk with Felicella and a closing reception. BPL is looking into the possibility of offering another residency to an artist or musician in the fall of 2014 and creating a writers room and writers-in-residence program.

## Completion of The Brooklyn Daily Eagle Digitization Project

BPL's project to digitize the first 50 years of *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, which is among one of the Collection's most important resources, began in 2003. Published from 1841 to 1955, then revived for a short time from 1960 to 1963, the *Eagle* was at one point the nation's most widely read afternoon newspaper. In 2013, BPL entered into an agreement with Newspapers.com, with additional assistance from the Library of Congress, to digitize the remaining half of the *Eagle*. In 2014, the entire run of the newspaper was made available for free on BPL's website, making it easier than ever for patrons to conduct genealogy research, learn about the borough's history and access primary source materials.

Key | ● Completed ● Delayed/Date Change ● On Track ● New



## ***Brooklyn by the Book***

Brooklyn by the Book is a new collaboration between BPL, Community Bookstore and Congregation Beth Elohim (CBE). Launched in the fall of 2013, events are held in one of three spaces: CBE's historic 1,200-seat sanctuary, its more intimate chapel or at Central Library's Dweck Center for Contemporary Culture. Brooklyn by the Book events promote discussion, celebrate the life of the mind and tap into the rich culture of writing and reading in Park Slope and the broader community of Brooklyn. Programming focuses primarily on current events and literary fiction. Authors in the 2013/14 season included Paul Harding, Michael Chabon, Donna Tartt, Ari Shavit, Chang-Rae Lee and Malcolm Gladwell.

## **New Key Initiative**

### ***Study of Arts and Cultural Programming***

In 2013, BPL received support from the Booth Ferris Foundation for a review of its arts and cultural programming and related outreach and marketing strategies at Central Library's Dweck Center for Contemporary Culture. Starting in July 2013 and running through June 2015, BPL will implement a two-part strategic review, composed of an 18-month program audit followed by a six-month business planning process. The goal of the study will be to identify ways to raise awareness and connect more people with BPL's exceptional educational and cultural programs.



(Opposite) Malcom Gladwell; (this page, top to bottom) Donna Tartt; Chang-Rae Lee; and Paul Harding.

# INCLUSION



**Present a welcoming and inclusive environment**

# OUR PROGRESS IN INCLUSION: 2013



## ***Business English Conversation Classes***

In September 2013, BPL began offering Business English Conversation Classes at three of its locations. Funded by New York State's Adult Literacy Library Services grant program, the classes aim to help immigrants improve their English for the professional workplace, gain a greater understanding of American workplace culture and build their knowledge of resources in the Library and throughout the city. The classes are designed to meet the needs of advanced-level English-language learners who are professionals (university degree or higher) or entrepreneurs. Workplace topics have included goal setting, elevator pitches, business emails, networking skills, interviews and responding to job ads. In addition, every class introduces students to useful phrases, vocabulary and cultural conventions in the American workplace. Classes are offered as six-week series with seven series per year at the Business & Career Library, Central Library and Sunset Park Library. To date, the program has served immigrants from over 20 countries.

## ***Programs for Teens and Young Adults with Disabilities***

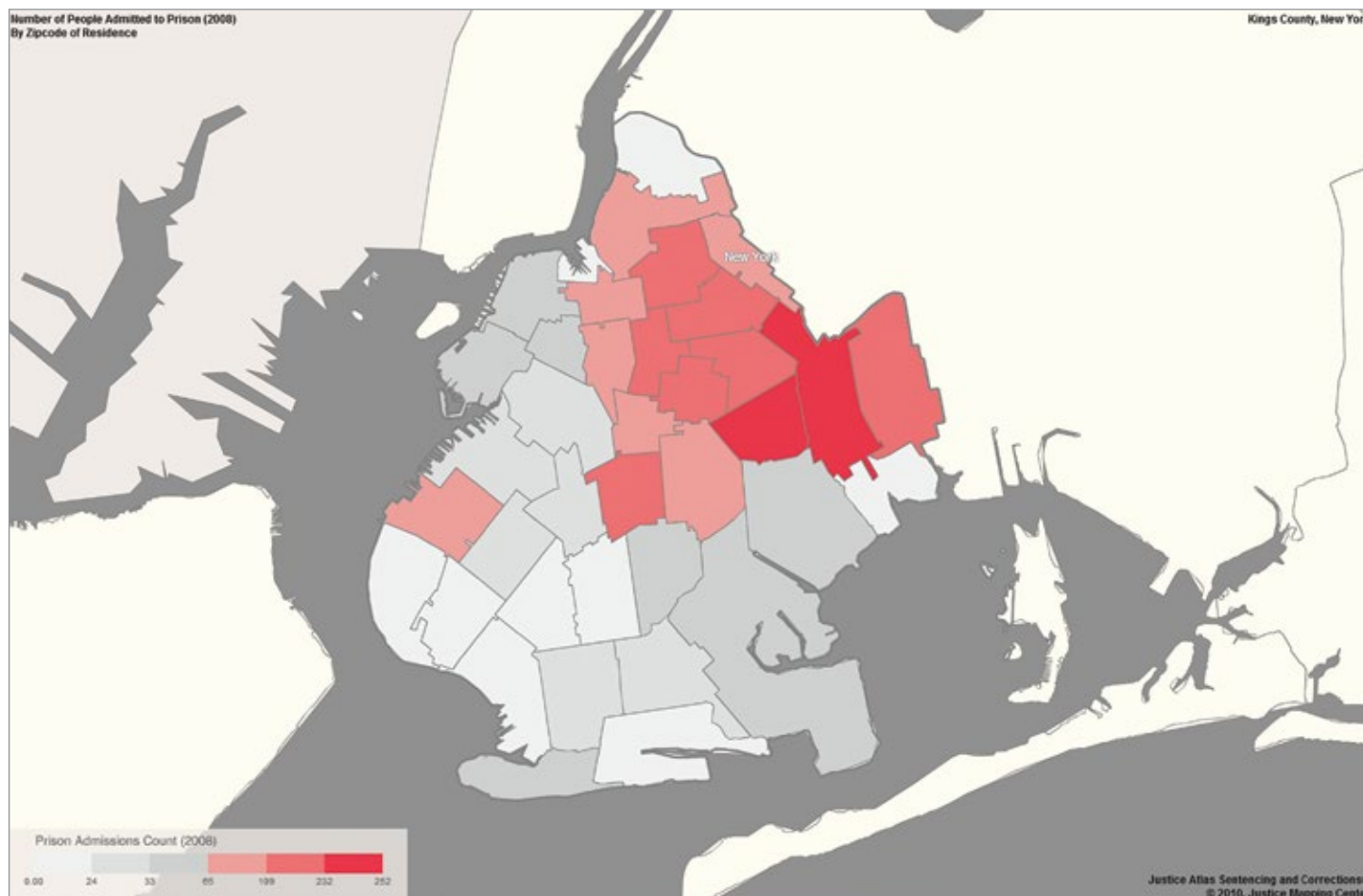
To help expand the Library's services for youth with disabilities, in October 2012, BPL's The Child's Place for Children with Special Needs hired a new Teen and Young Adult Librarian. In FY 2013, The Child's Place offered 34% more programs to teens and young adults and served 25% more teenagers, for a total of 3,140 teens. In May, BPL began offering Lego programs once a month at Flatlands Library and soon expanded the program to Red Hook and Saratoga libraries. In February 2014, we will also begin offering regular inclusionary programs for teens at Central Library, including such programs as Adaptive Gaming Arcade and Teen Time for All.

## Services for Teens and Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness

BPL has dramatically increased its services for youth living in shelters. Our Kidsmobile visits shelters to provide opportunities for children and teens to sign up for library cards and borrow books. We also offer read-aloud programs and library card registration at shelter day care and after-school programs. In FY 2013, after forming new partnerships in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, BPL was able to serve 40% more children and teens living in shelters than in the previous fiscal year. Furthermore, in early FY 2014, BPL's Kidsmobile began visiting four additional shelters, for a total of 11 shelters. Libraries can be important sources of community stability for youth experiencing homelessness, and we will continue to seek out new ways to grow our services for this population.

## Department of Outreach Services

In July 2013, with funding from the Charles H. Revson Foundation, BPL created a new Department of Outreach Services to plan and implement an inclusion strategy that targets Brooklyn's immigrant, older adult and transitional populations, including people experiencing homelessness and incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals. The department is tasked with forming partnerships with local community-based organizations and City agencies that will help BPL reach wider audiences and provide new or expanded programming. The department will also create and coordinate professional development and training initiatives that will prepare the Library's public service staff to better identify, understand and serve these unique groups. In 2014, the department will oversee the continued delivery of creative aging programs at several neighborhood branches as part of its efforts to engage older Brooklynites and help to combat isolation.



Number of people admitted to prison (2008) by zip code of residence. Justice Mapping Center, © 2010

BPL is now planning programs based on this demographic information, and will soon offer job readiness training in Red Hook and Brownsville through a partnership with the Center for Court Innovation.

## New Key Initiatives

### Staff Training

In early 2014, BPL's Department of Outreach Services will hold employee training sessions to educate staff members about the services and resources available to people experiencing homelessness. Staff will be invited to engage with representatives from the NYC Department of Homeless Services' Common Ground Outreach Team, employees from area shelters, BPL's Public Safety team, and shelter residents on topics around staff sensitivity and access to available resources for homeless patrons. More comprehensive training is scheduled to take place this summer.

### Veterans Oral History Project

In partnership with the Library of Congress, BPL's Department of Outreach Services and the Brooklyn Collection will launch the Veterans Oral History Project in February 2014. As part of the program, veterans will be invited to record their personal accounts of military combat from World War II to present conflicts. These recordings will be archived at BPL and at the Library of Congress so that future generations may listen to and better understand the realities of war and the men and women who serve.

### Televisiting Services

BPL will soon begin offering televisiting services at select branches. Through the program, parents who participate in our jail-based early literacy programs will be able to connect to their families through teleconference platforms at neighborhood libraries. This technology will enable currently incarcerated parents to read books with their children via live video at some of our locations. The initiative is made possible through a broad partnership that includes the New York Society for Ethical Culture, NYC Department of Corrections, Federal Bureau of Prisons, Cisco Systems and St. John's University.

### Mobile Libraries

In February 2014, Outreach Services will create mobile libraries that will operate weekly at several NYC Department of Corrections (DOC) jails. These satellite libraries will provide much-needed educational and recreational reading material for hundreds of incarcerated New Yorkers who would otherwise have no access to general libraries. Priority DOC populations served by BPL's book loan service include people detained in segregated housing units and incarcerated individuals with mental illness.

### "Our Streets, Our Stories" Oral History Project

In March 2014, Outreach Services and the Brooklyn Collection will pilot "Our Streets, Our Stories," an oral history project working with older adults from the Leonard, Kings Bay and Flatbush libraries. "Our Streets, Our Stories" will capture the history of our ever-changing neighborhoods through the voices of those who have lived there, teach local older adults technology skills and interviewing techniques and create a project model that can be used by other libraries throughout the city. These unique stories will lay the foundation for community-produced local history archives at each pilot branch, establishing these sites as destinations for people interested in Brooklyn history.



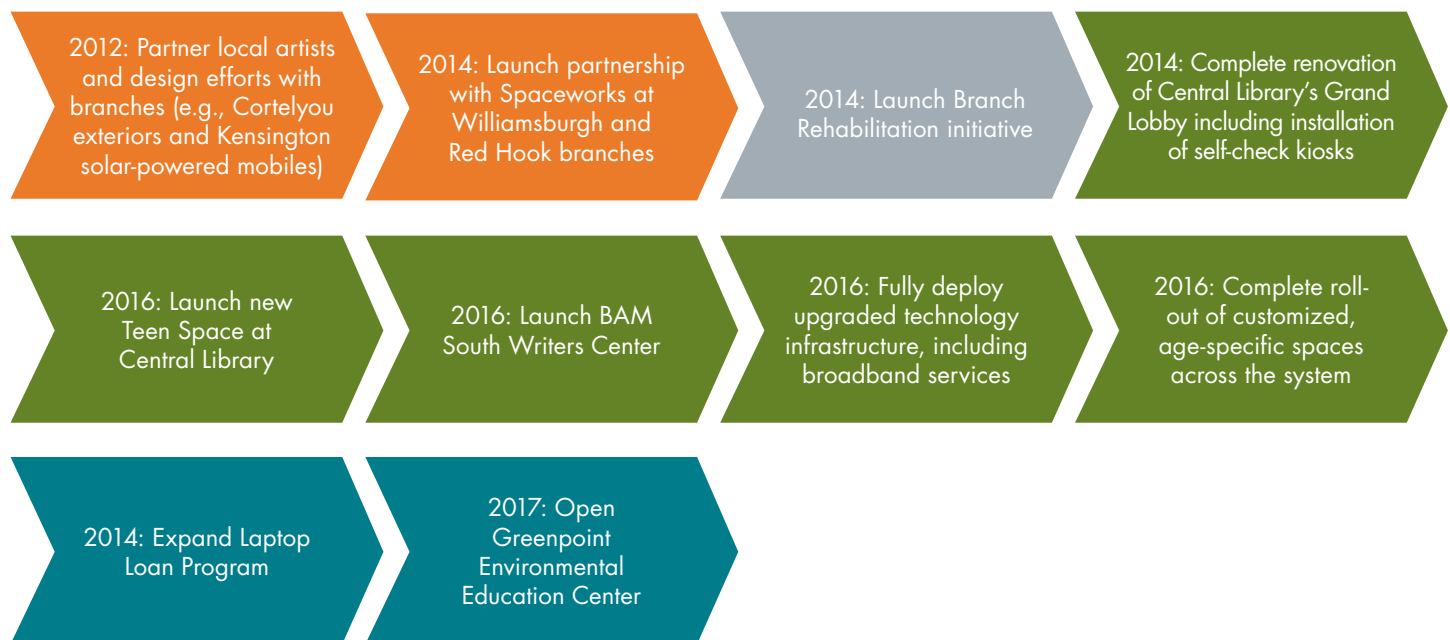
A group of Shinnecock Native Americans and veterans who participated in BPL's Veterans Oral History Project. Photo © Alexander Kelly

# SPACE



**Provide functional, attractive and safe spaces and align the Library's physical footprint with twenty-first-century service delivery**

# OUR PROGRESS IN SPACE: 2013



## Brooklyn Heights Library

Among all of BPL's libraries, Brooklyn Heights Library has some of the greatest capital needs. Built in 1962, it has more than \$9.2 million in deferred capital maintenance, including an estimated \$3.5 – \$4.5 million to replace a non-functioning HVAC system. Additionally, the building is poorly designed, has an inefficient floor plan that hinders public service and more than 50% of its space is unavailable for public use.

To address these challenges, in 2013 BPL announced that it is pursuing a plan in Brooklyn Heights to develop an inspiring, relevant and state-of-the-art library; eliminate millions of dollars in unmet capital needs; and raise funds for branches across Brooklyn.

In partnership with a private developer, BPL plans to build a new Brooklyn Heights Library within a mixed-use facility on the same site as the existing Library. In June 2013, in collaboration with the New York City Economic Development Corporation, BPL released a Request for Proposals (RFP) to identify a development partner for Brooklyn Heights. The Library is also closely working with its Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to gather community input and identify the neighborhood's needs. BPL expects to identify a developer in summer 2014.

## Hurricane-Impacted Libraries

Twelve of our branch libraries were initially impacted by Hurricane Sandy, and six of these—Brighton Beach, Coney Island, Gerritsen Beach, Gravesend, Red Hook and Sheepshead Bay—sustained significant damage, with the worst of the damage occurring at Coney Island and Gerritsen Beach. Thanks to major grants from the AIG and the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, as well as an outpouring of support from diverse community and individual funders, we were able to replace lost collections, furniture, equipment and technology and to rehabilitate the existing infrastructure, doors, storefronts and electrical systems. All impacted libraries were reopened before the one-year anniversary of the hurricane, and many now look and function better today than they did before the storm.



Gerritsen Beach Library, November 2013. Photo © Trix Rosen Photography LTD

## **Capital Plan**

Across the system, BPL's 60 libraries have an estimated \$300 million in deferred capital needs. We need to replace heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, boilers and roofs, make safety and security enhancements and embark on interior renovations, among countless other projects. Yet, the Library receives an average of only \$15 million a year from the City to maintain its buildings. As part of our capital plan, last year BPL received over \$13 million in appropriations from the Mayor, Borough President, the Brooklyn Delegation and City Council Members. This money will enable BPL to begin replacing the roofs at Leonard and Dyker libraries, create an outdoor plaza at Midwood Library, replace the boiler at Arlington Library and replace the HVAC system at Cypress Hills Library, among other improvements.

## **Expanded Digital Access and Training**

From 2010 to 2013, as a partner in the NYC Connected Communities program, with funding from the Broadband Technology Opportunity Program (BTOP) of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and matching

assistance from NYC's Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications and the Leon Levy Foundation, BPL made technology improvements and implemented a laptop loan program in eight branches in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brownsville and Bushwick, communities with significant numbers of households living below the poverty level. Funding also enabled BPL to equip Central Library's Shelby White and Leon Levy Information Commons with modern technology to facilitate access and digital literacy training as well as create the new 50-seat Computer Center at Central Library. In total, BPL offered over 114,000 two-hour laptop sessions; over 3,200 computer classes, job readiness workshops, one-on-one technology and career counseling sessions and outreach events; and provided unprecedented amounts of technology training, including more than 2,200 events serving over 17,500 attendees. Similarly, since opening in January 2013, the Info Commons has become one of the most heavily-used spaces in our library system. It has hosted over 400 classes and workshops with a combined attendance of over 5,000 participants; over 800 ESOL and foreign language conversation group meetings; and over 20 hours a week of free one-on-one business, financial and career counseling services provided by partner organizations.

## New Key Initiatives

### **BAM South Writers Center**

BPL is exploring the development of a Writers Center in the South Site mixed-use building, which will be located in the Downtown Brooklyn Cultural District. The Writers Center will be an inspiring new space that will serve the needs of Brooklyn's emerging and established authors and celebrate the borough's creative community. The Center will serve as an incubator for creative expression and development, providing workspace to writers and hosting lectures, author talks, workshops, classes and other public events. It will be an anchor for the district, linking BAM, 651 Arts and numerous other downtown Brooklyn cultural organizations and drawing people into a unique facility dedicated to fostering creativity.

### **Greenpoint Environmental Education Center**

In late 2013, BPL submitted a preliminary grant application seeking funding to create the Greenpoint Environmental Education Center (GEEC), an addition to the Greenpoint Library that is designed to provide neighborhood residents with access to quality environmental education programs and related collections that foster better awareness and stewardship of the environment. The GEEC would offer educational opportunities for youth and adults to learn about the environmental history of Greenpoint and the neighborhood's ongoing environmental challenges, and be a venue where community organizations can meet and work collaboratively on initiatives that will benefit local residents. If funded, the project will begin in FY 2015.

### **Laptop Loan Program**

BPL continued its successful laptop loan program in FY 2014 and will expand it in FY 2015. In addition to the eight branches in the Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brownsville and Bushwick neighborhoods that participated in the original NYC Connected Communities project, Kings Highway, Sunset Park and New Lots libraries will be added. Patrons at these branches will be able to borrow laptops for use on-site and take part in technology and job preparation classes.

Additionally, in FY 2014 the Library began a three-year effort to expand broadband speeds at all branches by focusing on locations with the highest demand and slowest speeds. Ethernet has already been installed at Macon and Central Library and will be installed at an additional 13 branches before the end of June 2014. We will work toward upgrading our remaining 45 branches within the next 2 years. This technology will address current branch network bandwidth speeds and also scale to support future needs.



A mural by artist Leslie A. Wood was painted onto the side of Greenpoint Library in 2013. Photo © Leslie A. Wood

# STEWARDSHIP



Develop and maintain an adaptive and responsive culture of service

# OUR PROGRESS IN STEWARDSHIP: 2013



## **BookOps**

BPL's shared technical services collaboration with New York Public Library (NYPL) was successfully launched on May 6, 2013. During the spring and summer, staff worked together to set up workflows, negotiate joint discounts with vendors and implement the start of the new fiscal year's ordering of books and other collection materials. Since July, BookOps has added more than 30,000 titles to the catalog, representing 112,000 new items in the collections, and moved more than 700,000 items between Brooklyn locations. It has also saved BPL and NYPL a combined total of \$1.5 million in operating costs while decreasing the amount of administrative back-office work required of our branch staff.

## **Data Collection and Visualization**

In 2013, BPL also launched BklynSTAT, a new data visualization tool and established key performance indicators and targets for circulation, programs and branch usage. In summer 2014, BPL will launch BklynSTAT for public viewing. Additionally, in partnership with the NYC Department for Citywide Planning, BPL established new census tract boundaries for each community that the Library serves. This work enabled BPL to create Library Tabulation Areas (LTAs), allowing for more precise program and communications targeting.

## **Self-Check Installations**

In the fall of 2013, the Library began a pilot at six branches to allow patrons to both check out and return materials at the same self-check machine. BPL is currently evaluating whether it should extend this program systemwide. By March 2015, patrons will be able to pay fines and donate to the Library using our ABC debit cards or their preferred credit card. The Library is on track to complete its self-check installations by 2015.

Key | Completed Delayed/Date Change On Track New



Guests at the Brooklyn Classic, October 1, 2013. Photo © Philip Greenberg

### ***Brooklyn Eagles***

Since forming in April 2013, BPL's young professionals group, the Brooklyn Eagles, has held a rooftop party at Central Library, a fall cocktail party and benefit and a holiday meet-up. The group aims to connect with new patrons, promote BPL as a cultural center and build a vibrant community around the Library's resources. In October 2013, nearly 300 people attended the Brooklyn Classic, the Brooklyn Eagles' inaugural fundraiser at Central Library, which raised over \$50,000 to benefit BPL's programming for children and teenagers.

### ***Bike the Branches***

On May 11, 2013, BPL held its first annual Bike the Branches fundraising event, a day-long bike ride benefitting BPL. The event culminated in a Finish Line Celebration at Central Library with a performance from Brooklyn-based rockers The Skins and prize giveaways, including tickets to the Great GoogaMooga and a children's BMX bike. More than 400 cyclists participated in the event, helping to raise over \$20,000.



Bike the Branches participants, May 11, 2013. Photo © BPL staff

### ***Visitor Counters***

In 2013, BPL launched automated visitor counters at every location that accurately capture the number of people who visit our libraries, allowing for improved staff and program planning.

## ***NYC Neighborhood Library Awards***

Last fall, The Charles H. Revson Foundation launched the NYC Neighborhood Library Awards to recognize New York City's outstanding branch libraries. More than 4,300 nominations were submitted from across the city. Among the five boroughs, Brooklyn had the most finalists, and both Sheepshead Bay and Macon libraries received top honors and were awarded \$10,000 prizes; runner-up Kings Bay Library received \$5,000.

## ***Passport Services***

In May 2011, BPL opened a Passport Application Acceptance Facility at Central Library, making it the first library in New York City to offer passport services. Spurred by the success of the facility, BPL expanded the operation in June 2013 by providing a larger space with an air-conditioned waiting room, additional staff and service points, a new paging system and longer weekend hours. To meet the strong demand, in October 2013, BPL opened a second Passport Application Acceptance Facility at Kings Highway Library.

## ***Central Doors Restoration***

In September 2013 BPL unveiled the newly restored historic main entrance to Central Library. The new bronze and glass doors are exact replicas of the original. Funding for this project came through the 2012 Partners in Preservation program, a competition sponsored by American Express and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Library won the competition by receiving the greatest number of public votes and was awarded \$270,000.

## ***New Key Initiatives***

### ***New Café at Central Library***

The renowned Brooklyn pie shop, Four & Twenty Blackbirds, will begin operating Central Library's café on Pi Day, March 14, 2014.

### ***Kings Highway Book Sorter***

In January 2014, BPL installed an automatic book sorter at Kings Highway Library. The machine allows patrons to return materials and immediately receive a confirmation receipt through an ATM-like interface. Books are automatically scanned and sorted, lessening BPL staff from labor-intensive, back-office processes and freeing them up to focus on direct public service.



Ribbon-cutting ceremony at Central Library, September 19, 2013. From left: Roberta Lane of the National Trust for Historic Preservation; Cheryl Rosario of American Express; Linda E. Johnson of Brooklyn Public Library; and State Senator Eric Adams. Photo © Philip Greenberg

# BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

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