

Bklyn Public Library

Start Here

Strategic Plan Update
Spring 2015



INTRODUCTION



Linda E. Johnson



Nicholas A. Gravante, Jr.

Brooklyn Public Library's staff and Board of Trustees are proud to present the Library's second annual strategic plan update. We hope you will join us in celebrating the many achievements made possible by your support as we mark our tremendous progress toward the goals set forth in the plan.

In 2014, the Library expanded its hours of service at branches throughout the borough and conducted our most extensive staff hiring and training since 2008. We welcomed new librarians to BPL and staffed every branch with technology resource specialists to help patrons improve their digital literacy.

Attendance at Library programs reached an all-time high as Brooklynites turned to their local branches for help finding jobs, starting businesses, preparing for college and learning new languages. We engaged a record number of children and teens in the Summer Reading program and introduced new initiatives to help immigrant communities access legal services and gain citizenship.

As you will see throughout this report, Brooklyn Public Library's presence in the community extends beyond our 59 branches. We deliver wireless internet devices to homebound Brooklynites who face isolation and loneliness. We teach the art of comic book creation to elementary school students at New York City Housing Authority community centers. Our pop-up libraries offer specially curated collections at homeless shelters and other underserved locations, and our TeleStory program facilitates virtual story times, sing-alongs and other bonding activities for incarcerated parents and their children. At BPL's website, bklynlibrary.org, patrons can check out electronic materials, complete online classes and prepare for the SAT, GRE and various other academic and professional examinations.

No civic institution in our borough serves more people in more neighborhoods than Brooklyn Public Library. The unrelenting support of our patrons, donors, trustees, elected officials, friends groups and volunteers ensures that Brooklynites from every neighborhood will continue to receive the help they need to achieve their dreams.

On behalf of the more than one million patrons and visitors who rely on our programs and collections, thank you for another successful year at Brooklyn Public Library.

Very truly,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Linda E. Johnson".

Linda E. Johnson
President & CEO

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Nicholas A. Gravante, Jr.".

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

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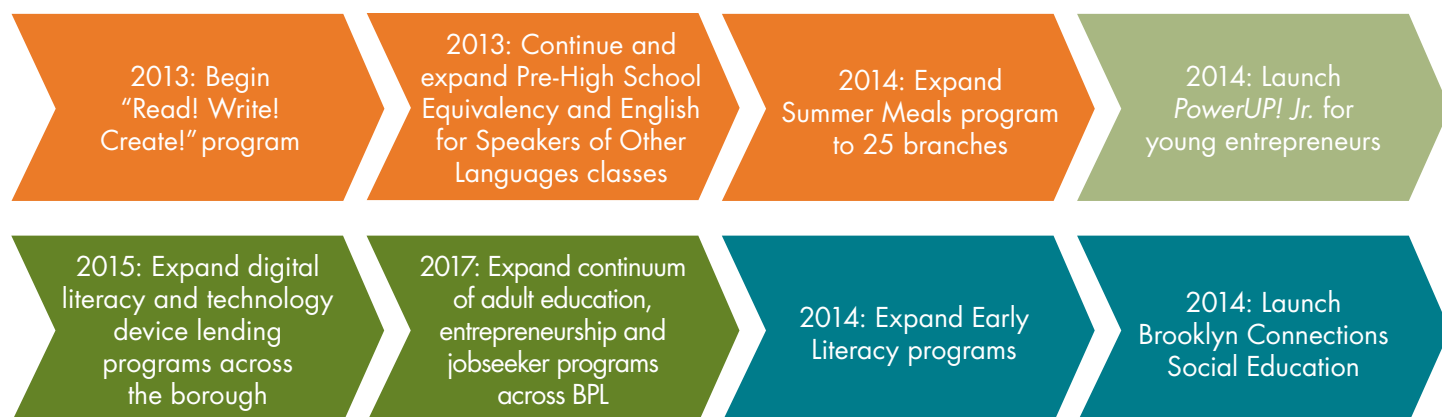


To view the original strategic plan and the previous year’s update, visit bklynlibrary.org/start-here.

EDUCATION



Promote early literacy, lifelong learning and civic participation



2014 PROGRESS

Read! Write! Create!

Read! Write! Create! helps children from low-income households develop stronger reading and writing skills with enriching, interactive comic book-making workshops. The program is a partnership of Brooklyn Public Library, the Comic Book Project and the New York City Housing Authority, with funding provided by a National Leadership Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). BPL conducted Read! Write! Create! workshops in public housing community centers in Brownsville, Bushwick and Coney Island. More than 240 students from the ages of 7 to 12 participated, and every child who completed the series received a collection of graphic novels to keep. By the end of the program's first year, nearly 1,700 books were distributed to children and their families.

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

Since being awarded two five-year Workforce Investment Act grants from the New York State Education Department in 2013, BPL has improved and expanded our Pre-High School Equivalency (HSE) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes. We introduced new Pre-HSE classes at Kensington and New Lots Libraries, added an all-day Saturday class at Pacific Library and hosted monthly meetings for ESOL and HSE educators. In addition to expanding our ESOL classes to three new locations, we developed a wide range of supplemental ESOL workshops on topics like emergency preparedness, financial literacy and goal setting. In 2015 the Library will provide a two-week computer-based training and writing project for ESOL learners. At the conclusion of the program, participants will submit their writings to New York University's *Literacy Review*, an annual journal of writing from adult literacy programs throughout New York City.

Summer Services

2014 was a banner year for BPL's Summer Reading initiative, as a record 138,000 children and teens participated in the program. In June we kicked off the 2014 Summer Reading program with an all-day family science festival that featured educational activity stations and a special appearance by Carmelo the Science Fellow. With funding from an IMLS grant, BPL launched children's Summer Science Clubs in branches throughout the system; several of the clubs proved so popular that they have continued as year-long programs. The Library continued its partnership with the NYC Department of Education's Office of School Food and Nutrition to provide free weekday lunches for children during the summer. In 2014 we expanded the Summer Meals program to 25 branches, up from six the previous year, and we will continue to provide meals in 2015.

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

BPL marked another successful year for the Brooklyn Cultural Adventures Program (BCAP), an award-winning summer day camp that introduces children ages 7 to 12 to the wonders of Brooklyn Public Library and five other member institutions: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn Children's Museum, Prospect Park and Prospect Park Zoo. Funding from the Pinkerton Foundation allowed BPL to pilot BCAPteen, a summer program for adolescents with a curriculum that focuses on new media, communications and youth leadership through filmmaking. BCAPteen was very well received and will resume this summer.

PowerUP! Expansion

BPL's PowerUP! Business Plan Competition has supported Brooklyn entrepreneurs for 11 years, launching successful businesses like Greenlight Bookstore, Bogota Latin Bistro and Owl & Thistle General Store. We are exploring the viability of a PowerUP! Jr. program that would utilize a virtual simulation to teach teens the challenges and rewards of opening and operating a business. Thanks to the success of PowerUP!, the Library earned the support of the Immigrant Business Initiative—a joint project of the NYC Department of Small Business Services and Citi Community Development—to develop PowerUP! Kreyol. BPL will work with the Haitian-American Business Network to provide Brooklyn's Haitian immigrant community with orientations, classes and business consultations conducted in Kreyol. Other partners will include the Caribbean American Chamber of Commerce and Ms. Stacey Toussaint, a past PowerUP! winner and a second-generation Haitian American. The authors of the top three PowerUP! Kreyol business plans will earn seed capital to start their businesses—\$5,000 for first place and \$2,500 each for two runners-up—and will also be encouraged to participate in the next cycle of the PowerUP! Business Plan Competition.



Digital Literacy and Technology Lending

In 2014, New York City's Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications pledged to continue funding the highly successful New York City Connected Communities (NYC-CC) program through FY 2018. The NYC-CC program funds laptop loans, digital literacy resources and job readiness classes in eight northeast Brooklyn libraries. With private funding, we were also able to introduce the laptop loan program to Crown Heights Library. BPL expanded its partnership with BRIC to offer new certification classes and expand BRIC's digital media programs—already successful at Central, New Lots and Kings Highway Libraries—to Coney Island Library.

BPL's award-winning Today's Teens, Tomorrow's Techies (T4) program created six new classes in 2014; topics included 3D printing, visual effects and robotics. Now in its tenth year, T4 teaches computer skills to students ages 14 to 18 and prepares them to serve on the Library's volunteer team, where they provide administrative support to our librarians and help patrons use Library technology.

Our digital literacy and technology lending programs will expand in 2015 thanks to the support of the New York State Assembly's Brooklyn delegation, which has awarded BPL \$3 million through the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York for broadband upgrades and the purchase of iPads, early literacy computers and multimedia kits for every BPL branch. Over the course of the three-year program, BPL will also establish laptop classrooms at select branches and purchase DIY skill-building kits to facilitate workshops for children and teens.

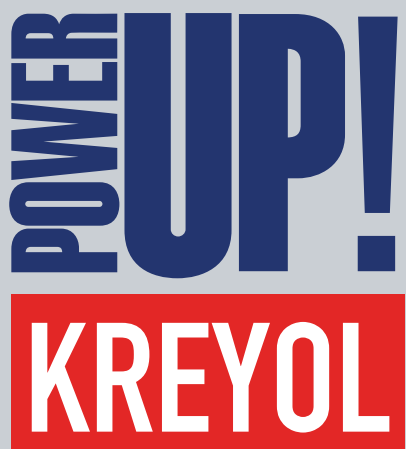




Photo © Philip Greenberg

Michelle Lewis, PowerUP! winner, Spoonable LLC.

Entrepreneurship and Jobseeker Assistance

The Library now employs four Job Information Resource Librarians (JIRLs) serving ten locations: one at Central Library, one at the Business & Career Library at Brooklyn Heights and two who work out of eight branches through the NYC Connected Communities project. The JIRLs conduct job searching workshops, provide personalized support to jobseekers and work with community partners to promote Brooklyn Public Library's career services. The librarians work closely with our technology staff to help jobseekers participate in BPL's computer training classes, and they are also responsible for connecting patrons to digital professional development resources offered through the Library, including the Metrix Learning System and lynda.com.

The Business & Career Services team will continue to grow in 2015 with the addition of a JIRL who will serve another six branches. Meanwhile, a new job training and outreach specialist will develop curriculum and training to help our JIRLs provide high-quality service to patrons.

BPL's Business & Career Services team is working with the Brownsville Partnership on the 5,000 Jobs Campaign, an effort by public agencies and community-based organizations to help 5,000 Brownsville residents gain employment by the end of 2017. The Library is planning job fairs, developing referral lists, creating resources guides, hosting workshops and providing one-on-one counseling to support the campaign.

Job Readiness for Adult Learners

Approximately half of the 1,100 students in our ESOL and Pre-HSE classes are seeking employment or looking for better jobs. BPL's new Job Readiness for Adult Learners program will help these students overcome barriers to employment and succeed in the workplace. With a grant from the Robin Hood Foundation, we have hired two job information specialists to provide adult learners with individualized résumé help, referrals to appropriate professional development opportunities and connections to workforce development agencies and potential employers. The specialists will participate in trainings with our Pre-HSE and ESOL staff to help them serve our students.

Teacher Lab

BPL conducted a more intensive Teacher Lab at Central Library in 2014 to build on our success at connecting with local educators through the MyLibraryNYC program. The two-week course introduced teachers to free educational resources that they can use in the classroom, including several that address the Common Core State Standards. The lab also informed educators of the many helpful BPL services available to them and their students.



Photo © Philip Greenberg

Central Library's annual Big Brooklyn Playdate



KEY NEW INITIATIVES

Early Literacy Expansion

BPL was one of eight organizations selected to share a \$1.5 million allocation from the New York City Council to improve early childhood literacy across the city. The funds will allow the Library to offer more language-building programs for babies and toddlers; expand Ready, Set, Kindergarten! to more neighborhoods; reach out to families who are not currently utilizing BPL's early literacy services; provide new spaces for play and reading in our branches; and purchase more books for the borough's youngest readers.

The Altman Foundation has awarded BPL a capacity-building grant to pilot our Early Literacy Ambassador program. We have hired two early literacy ambassadors, both bilingual, to work part-time at our Sunset Park and Stone Avenue branches. The ambassadors will conduct outreach to connect parents, caregivers and educators of young children with the Library; provide additional First Five Years programming at their assigned branches; and host workshops on early literacy.

At Central Library's annual Big Brooklyn Playdate, babies and toddlers enjoy various play stations while parents and caregivers learn about the importance of play in the development of children's language skills. Librarians and experts from the Infant Toddler Technical Resource Center provide information and materials to the families who attend. BPL expanded the playdate events to four new locations in 2014 and will include additional branches in 2015.

Brooklyn Connections Social Education

In July 2013, the Library received a two-year grant for the creation of the Paula and David Weiner Social Movements Curriculum for Brooklyn Connections, the school outreach program operated by BPL's Brooklyn Collection. The funding will help BPL develop a new educational module that focuses on social movements, radicalism and labor unions in Brooklyn and New York City. The Library will host professional development workshops to introduce teachers to the modules and help them engage their students. To date we have developed seven modules with the help of New York University Professor Danny Wolkwitz: Child Labor, Women's Rights, Fair and Decent Housing, the Transit Workers' Strike, Civil Rights, Community Control and Environmentalism. An eighth module on LGBT Rights is currently in development.

Brooklyn Connections successfully piloted the Social Movements Curriculum at three schools in spring 2014, gaining valuable feedback from students and teachers. The Library held two roundtable discussions to test modules with 20 longtime Brooklyn Connections teachers, museum educators, historians and professors. Five schools signed on to use the curriculum in the 2014–15 school year.

Brooklyn Connections helps middle school students become scholars by instructing them in the usage of primary source materials and helping them develop critical reading, writing, presentation and analytical skills. Thanks to the generous support of New York Life, in 2014 BPL was able to increase the Brooklyn Connections staff to three full-time employees and execute a marketing campaign to recruit more schools to participate in the program. Brooklyn Connections will enroll more than 35 schools by the end of FY 2016.



ACCESS



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



2014 PROGRESS

World Language Materials

In 2014 BPL shared its world language materials with more patrons by floating Central Library's collection throughout the system. We received a generous gift from Denise and Mike Reiss to create the Reiss World Language Collection, a series of more than 400 volumes in Chinese, Hebrew, Spanish and Russian. We also earned a grant from the Moscow-based Mikhail Prokhorov Fund to expand our offerings for Brooklyn's large Russian-speaking community. BPL has used the funds to purchase titles by authors featured in our popular Russian Literary Series, as well as works by the winners and nominees of prestigious Russian literary awards, replacement copies of our most popular Russian materials and books from independent foreign publishers that are difficult to obtain in the United States.

PowerUser Program

In 2015 BPL will launch the PowerUser program to reward patrons who make exceptionally frequent use of the Library. PowerUsers will receive special recognitions and have the opportunity to participate in focus groups to assist BPL with planning and programming. We will begin the program by identifying patrons who have tallied the most lifetime checkouts and will next reach out to patrons with the highest number of computer sessions, eBook checkouts or program attendance.

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



Bklyn BookMatch

Bklyn BookMatch is an online readers' advisory service that introduces patrons to books that might interest them. Participants complete a short form on BPL's website describing the books and authors they enjoy, and a librarian then develops a list of five recommendations with links to our catalog so that patrons can easily place holds on the suggested titles. In the first four months of the program, a team of 25 librarians has answered more than 1,000 requests. Nearly 300 patrons have responded to express their gratitude for the service. In 2015, we will add more librarians to the BookMatch team and widely promote the service to the public.

KEY NEW INITIATIVES

Extended Hours of Service

Thanks to \$2.8 million in increased funding from the City of New York, as well as savings from internal efficiencies, BPL's branches opened for an additional 202 hours per week beginning in October 2014. Our libraries are now open an average of 45 hours per week, up from 42, and we have doubled the number of locations offering six- or seven-day service. With expanded hours, we have been able to provide more of the innovative programs and exceptional services our patrons rely on while also creating career advancement opportunities for our staff. The funds have allowed us to bring aboard 27 new staff members, our largest hiring since 2008.

Library HotSpot Lending

In 2014 BPL launched the Library HotSpot program, a joint initiative with New York Public Library and Queens Library to address New York City's digital divide. Funded by Google, the Knight Foundation and other partners, Library HotSpot allows patrons from households without internet access to borrow 4G WiFi devices to create their own broadband internet hotspots. Each WiFi device is powered by an unlimited data plan from Sprint, and each can connect up to ten mobile devices over the course of a one-year loan period. BPL rolled out the program at our eight New York City Connected Communities locations in December 2014, and we will expand the program to more branches to loan a total of 3,000 devices over nine months.

Digital Badging

BPL received an IMLS National Leadership Grant in 2014 to pilot an enhanced digital badging project. In partnership with BiblioCommons, we developed a digital badging system to help the Library recognize the accomplishments of our patrons. The project's launch was incorporated into the annual Summer Reading program. We issued more than 36,000 badges to patrons of all ages, and in 2015 we will look for ways to expand digital badging to year-round programming.



A sample of the digital badges created to help the Library recognize patrons' accomplishments.

Online Meeting Room Reservations

Brooklyn Public Library's free meeting rooms are available for reservation by community boards, clubs, classes, support groups and countless other local organizations. BPL is piloting an online meeting room reservation system at Kensington and Park Slope Libraries in early 2015 in hopes of expanding the technology to all of our branches. Library cardholders will be able to submit room reservations through BPL's website. The pilot, a partnership with New York City Councilmember Brad Lander, is a first for branch library meeting rooms in New York City and will be modeled on BPL's successful reservation system for Central Library's Information Commons. Other components of the pilot program include staff training and community outreach to promote the availability of branch meeting rooms.

BklynShare

In January 2015 BPL received a Prototype Fund Award for the BklynShare project through the Knight Foundation's Knight News Challenge on Libraries. With this funding, BPL and its technology partner, Bureau Blank, will test the replication of the Library's book lending model for a program that allows knowledge-seekers to "check out" training and tutelage sessions with local experts. If the pilot is successful, BPL and Bureau Blank will look to develop BklynShare as an open source web-application that facilitates knowledge sharing among Library patrons throughout the entire borough.

idNYC

In July 2014, on the steps of Central Library, Mayor Bill de Blasio signed legislation to create idNYC, a free municipal ID available to all New York City residents regardless of their immigration status. The idNYC card grants access to important city services that require government-issued identification. The ID can also be used as a library card for all three NYC systems. Central Library is serving as an enrollment center for the program. Our Outreach Services team is helping to promote idNYC to New Yorkers who would benefit from obtaining city-issued photo identification.

Digital Resources and eBooks

The Library provides free access to a wealth of digital information that is typically only available through paid subscription. In addition to traditional online databases of journal articles and other reference works, in 2014 BPL adopted several electronic resources that offer patrons diverse learning experiences: lynda.com, an online learning platform offering over 3,000 courses comprised of more than 130,000 video tutorials; Metrix Learning, a site that allows BPL patrons to access coursework for certification classes in subjects like Microsoft Excel and Quickbooks; Mango Languages, an interactive tool for learning new languages; and Tumblebooks, a collection of animated picture books for new readers.

BPL has partnered with nine other libraries to develop Library Simplified, a two-year, IMLS-funded project to make eBooks and digital content more easily accessible to patrons. Library Simplified aims to reduce the number of clicks required to access an eBook. BPL and its partners are working with the nonprofit Radium to build an open eBook reading platform for libraries that will provide a seamless user experience regardless of the eBook's publisher or distributor.

Mobile Productivity

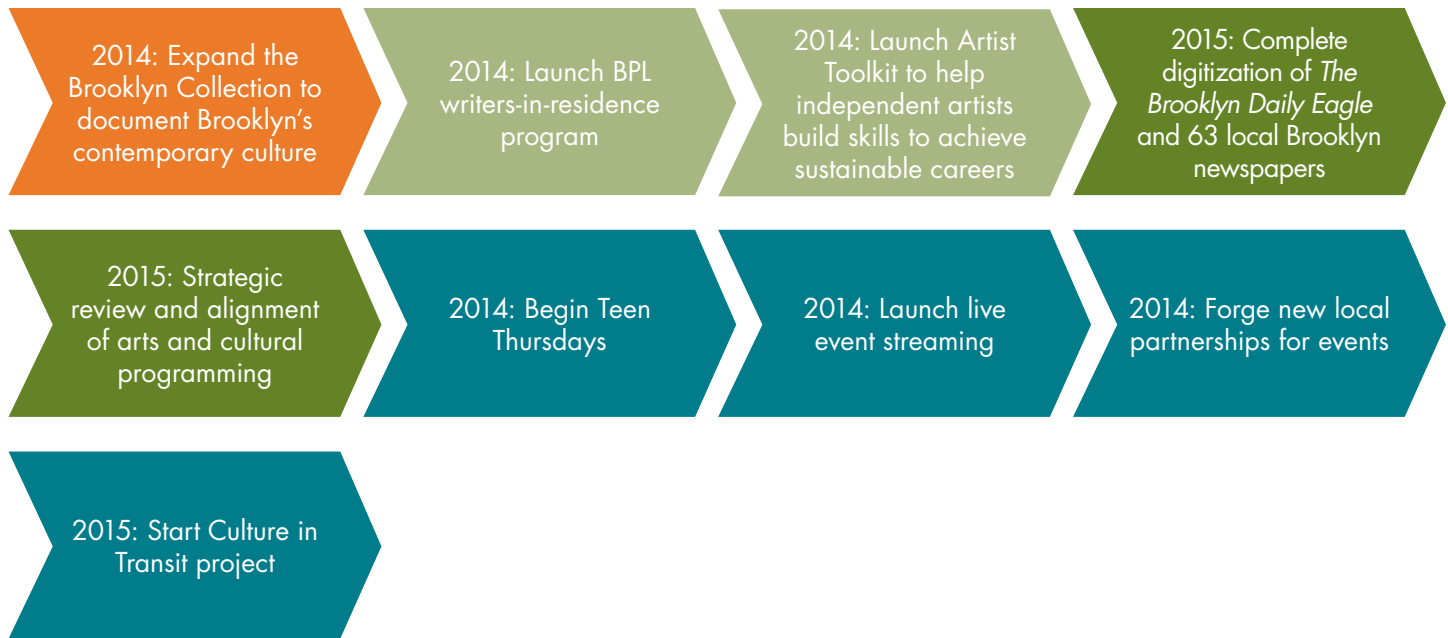
To serve the many patrons who visit the Library to print, scan or copy their documents and files, BPL has installed new multi-function scanning photocopiers at all of our locations that can save documents to USB devices or send them via email. In spring 2015 we will introduce mobile printing, enabling patrons to print directly from their laptops, tablets or smartphones. We will also add charging stations with power cords for mobile devices to branches by 2016.

CULTURE



Artist Steve Keene holding a painting performance on Central Library's Plaza.

Support creative expression, culture and the arts throughout Brooklyn



2014 PROGRESS

Brooklyn Collection

The Library's Brooklyn Collection has expanded its acquisition strategy to collect the recent history and present-day artifacts of life in Brooklyn. The Collection has developed a new model for acquiring photographic collections that provides both the artist and the Library with more flexibility to operate within copyright laws. BPL has forged new relationships with several contemporary photographers, including Jamel Shabazz, Elizabeth Felicella and Anders Goldfarb. In 2015, the Collection will expand its fiction holdings to include contemporary novels by Brooklyn authors. It will also launch a book club to explore the borough's literary history. The Collection is developing a plan for the acquisition and long-term preservation of digital-only material.

Supporting Brooklyn Artists and Writers

BPL's plan for an Artist's Toolkit has been incorporated into several programs to support local artists and artisans. In 2014 we partnered with the Department of Small Business Services to host a five-session entrepreneurship class at Stone Avenue Library to help crafters sell their wares on Etsy.com. The course covered branding, packaging, product placement, promotion and photography. In 2015 we will host a Spanish-language series to support Latino artist-entrepreneurs.

BPL continues to showcase local artists in exhibitions and events, including 2014's Dialogues in the Visual Arts, a new conversation series showcasing contemporary Brooklyn visual artists. We also held a second season of the popular Created in Brooklyn events, which feature Brooklyn artisans and entrepreneurs in conversation with photographer Randy Duchaine. A third season is in the works for 2015.

BPL partnered with NY Writers Coalition to provide free community workshops for Brooklyn writers of all genres and levels of experience. The workshops are currently offered at Central Library and are expanding in 2015 to the Bay Ridge, Macon and New Lots branches.

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Artists-in-Residence

BPL continued its artist-in-residence program in summer 2014 with Brooklyn-based painter and multimedia artist Steve Keene. Steve Keene's Brooklyn Experience wowed Central Library patrons with its playful music-themed pop art pieces. The artist also hosted an affordable art fair, held weekly painting performances on Central Library's Plaza and taught free art workshops for children.

Renowned jazz vocalist Cilla Owens became BPL's first Katowitz Radin Artist-in-Residence in the fall of 2014. Owens' credits include appearances at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, the Blue Note and other prominent venues around the world. She is the director of the Jazz Vocal Workshop at Hunter College. At BPL, Owens is able to access the Brooklyn Collection's sheet music collection, which dates to 1869. She is incorporating local history and storytelling into her residency lectures, workshops and performances.

Study of Arts and Cultural Programming

With support from the Booth Ferris Foundation, Brooklyn Public Library completed the first phase of our two-year review of programming and strategy at Central Library's Dweck Center for Contemporary Culture and implemented several of the study's recommendations. We redesigned our online events calendar to make it easier to navigate and are requesting that patrons RSVP online for high-demand events at the Dweck. BPL asked patrons to swipe their Library cards for entry to events at select pilot locations in 2014 so that we can learn more about the needs and demographics of our event audiences.

KEY NEW INITIATIVES

Teen Thursdays

Teen Thursdays, a new after-school initiative from the NYC Department of Education, places 7th and 8th grade students at cultural institutions to learn about United States history through the study of art and artifacts. Participants from two Brooklyn schools explored the borough's fascinating history at Central Library through the lens of theater and movies. The students engaged in acting exercises, creative writing and film clip analysis while examining real historical artifacts and primary source documents from our Brooklyn Collection archives. Participating students rated the program very highly—for most, it was their first exposure to Central Library and the Brooklyn Collection. The program will continue in spring 2015.

Live Event Streaming and Lincoln Center Local

A new partnership with Lincoln Center brought free musical, theatre and dance performances to our libraries in August and September of 2014. More than 10,000 Library patrons and members of the community voted to select the five Lincoln Center Local Live performances that were held at various branches. After the performances, BPL hosted question-and-answer sessions with the performers. The series culminated in a special musical presentation by the Villalobos Brothers that was live-streamed from Lincoln Center's campus to audiences in the Dweck and at four branches. In 2015 we will launch Lincoln Center Local: Free Screenings, a pilot program that will allow librarians to screen Lincoln Center-produced musical and theatrical productions at their branches for free.

In addition to streaming live events from BPL's cultural partners, the Dweck Center upgraded its audio-visual equipment in 2014, and we are now able to live-stream Dweck events on our website.

New Event Partnerships

BPL has developed an exciting new partnership with ProjectArt, a nonprofit that provides free hands-on art classes for children and teens in communities with few public art education opportunities. In 2014 we offered summer and fall sessions of the 10-week workshops at our Arlington, Brownsville, Bushwick, Central, Cypress Hills, Flatbush and Saratoga branches. The courses concluded with a professional show of students' work at a contemporary art gallery.

BPL collaborated with GrowNYC and Brooklyn's Food Book Fair to host a series of children's story hours at the weekly Grand Army Plaza Greenmarket, as well as a special fall event with apple-themed games and pumpkin painting.

Culture in Transit

Many communities are excluded from the city's digital cultural heritage because they lack the equipment and technical support to contribute their history to local and national archives. BPL is partnering with Queens Library and the Metropolitan New York Library Council to deliver digitization equipment and expertise to smaller libraries and community organizations throughout the city in an effort to help neighborhoods define and catalog their histories. The Culture in Transit project was awarded funding from the Knight Foundation's Knight News Challenge on Libraries to democratize the digitization process and help New Yorkers document their heritage.



Lincoln Center Local; Harlem Gospel Choir

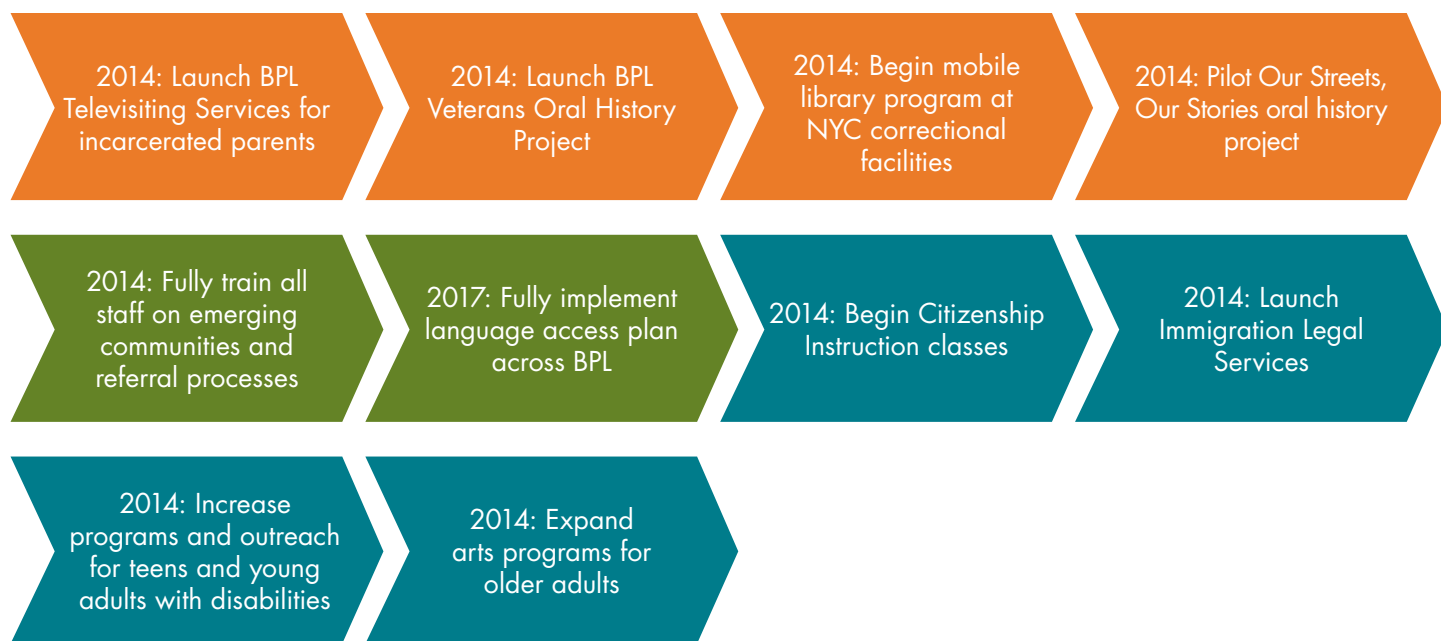


Created in Brooklyn; Groundswell

INCLUSION



Present a welcoming and inclusive environment



2014 PROGRESS

Televisiting Services

BPL's new TeleStory program utilizes video conferencing technology at Central Library and Rikers Island to facilitate story times, sing-alongs and other bonding activities for incarcerated parents and their children. Unique among U.S. libraries, the TeleStory program bridges formidable barriers to unite families who might otherwise be separated. BPL now has video conference access to all ten prisons on Rikers Island as well as every Brooklyn-based Department of Corrections facility. Case management support is provided by the NY Society for Ethical Culture, and telepresence equipment for the program was donated by Cisco Systems.

In April 2014 we launched Daddy and Me, a monthly early literacy training program for incarcerated fathers that is based on the curriculum of BPL's First Five Years initiative. Over a series of four classes led by BPL staff, fathers learn how their young children are developing reading and writing skills. Participants receive guidance on supporting their children's literacy from afar. Each participant is invited to record himself reading a story, the video of which is then provided to his family along with a copy of the book. Participants who complete the Daddy and Me series are invited to participate in the TeleStory program.

Veterans Oral History Project

Brooklyn Public Library is partnering with the Library of Congress (LOC) to preserve the combat stories of our borough's servicemen and women in the Brooklyn Collection and in LOC's permanent archive in Washington, DC. BPL staff and members of the community are trained to record the stories, which are then uploaded to our website, along with pictures and related bibliographies, by interns from Pratt Institute. Local partners on the project include the Brooklyn VA and the Park Slope Armory. On November 10, BPL's Outreach Services division hosted a daylong event at Central Library to honor veterans. In partnership with the United War Veterans Council, the Brooklyn VA and the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Veterans of Greater New York, BPL provided a resource fair, a children's read-aloud and book signing, and a

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

concert by the United States Navy Band. Attendees had the opportunity to participate in the Veterans Oral History Project.

Mobile Libraries

After establishing BPL's first satellite library on Rikers Island, the Outreach Services division expanded weekly satellite library services to several more detention centers. The satellites serve prisoners in the general population as well as those who are in solitary confinement or under mental health observation. By the end of 2014, our satellite libraries reached more than 3,200 incarcerated individuals and circulated more than 5,000 books.

With help from our Pratt Institute interns, BPL deployed its portable library unit, the Uni, for extended stays at homeless shelters throughout Brooklyn to provide residents with books and programming. The Library worked with Street Labs, creator of the Uni, to develop a new unit for a return engagement on Governors Island, where visitors were able to borrow books, register for Brooklyn Public Library cards and learn about the city's three library systems. At the end of the summer, the Governors Island Uni moved to the Brooklyn Children's Museum to showcase a collection of science-themed books, and in winter the unit traveled to the Bay Parkway Job Center with a collection of bilingual books curated by the Workers Justice Center.

Our Streets, Our Stories Oral History Project

Kings Bay, Leonard and Flatbush Libraries hosted pilots of the Our Streets, Our Stories oral history project in the spring of 2014. Coordinated by Outreach Services and the Brooklyn Collection, the project collects stories from older adults about the changes they have observed over time in their communities. Participants learn how to operate digital recording equipment and are trained to conduct effective interviews to help older Brooklynites catalog their memories. Each of the three pilot branches has compiled a roster of at least ten local patrons who are designated "community oral historians" with the ability to check out recording kits for interviews. In 2015 the stories will be uploaded to our website along with photos, interactive historical maps and other supplemental materials. We plan to expand Our Streets, Our Stories to three additional locations.

Staff Training

Roughly 54,000 people live in New York City's shelter system, including 22,000 children, while more than 3,000 people live unsheltered on our streets. Libraries often serve

as temporary day shelters for the homeless, and responses from a recent BPL-wide survey revealed that staff at nearly half of our sites work on a daily or weekly basis with people who are homeless. BPL partnered with the Center for Urban Community Services to develop and deliver multiple trainings to help Library staff serve this population. The trainings cover sensitivity, mental health awareness and community agency referrals for people experiencing homelessness, incarceration or mental illness. With funding provided by Williams, the Library held six training sessions in 2014 and plans to hold more in 2015.

Our Outreach Services team is providing BPL staff with training to help us better serve immigrant patrons. The trainings include topics like Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, college readiness for immigrant families, service to limited English proficient patrons and readers' advisory for immigrant patrons. The Library developed the trainings with CAMBA, Make the Road New York, the Arab American Association of New York and other partners.

Language Access

Brooklyn Public Library made great strides in 2014 toward improving our multilingual services throughout the system. We recruited bilingual and multilingual candidates for open librarian positions, and the 14 librarians we hired speak a total of ten different languages. In 2015 we plan to invite these new hires and other multilingual staff to attend a certification course in translation services to help BPL establish a core team of in-house translators.

The Library offered a series of workshops for immigrants, Brooklyn 101, in partnership with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, the NYC Office of Emergency Management and the NYC Commission on Human Rights. The multilingual workshops highlight the many services and resources available to immigrants in the areas of employment rights, education, housing access and healthcare enrollment.

In September 2014 we expanded our partnership with the CUNY Service Corps program to host four part-time bilingual Immigrant Services interns. The interns work with BPL staff on multilingual library-based civic engagement programs such as Know Your Rights and Responsibilities forums, citizenship exam preparation, computer classes and tax preparation assistance.

BPL's partnership with Google continued in 2014 as the company's volunteers led a workshop on Google Translate, a free online translation tool that supports 80 different languages. Approximately 40 people attended the session at Sunset Park Library. Participants were able to use tablets generously donated by Google.



Photo © Gregg Richards

Google Translate workshop at Sunset Park Library.

provide immigration consultations and legal help through scheduled appointments and open office hours at five BPL branches. They offered free legal screenings at 2014 Diversity Lottery assistance events and have conducted presentations for hundreds of BPL's Adult Learning clients. BPL's IJC fellows and CUNY Service Corps interns provide legal services in English, Kreyol, Spanish, Russian, Chinese and Urdu.

Services for Teens and Young Adults with Disabilities

BPL continues to expand its services for disabled teens and young adults with monthly Accessible Arcade gaming programs, Universal Makerspace events and Adaptive Teen Time. In December 2014 we held our first college fair for high school students with disabilities, featuring experts from NYC Special Education Parent Centers, CUNY and the NYC Department of Education. In 2015, The Child's Place for Children with Special Needs will be rebranded to appeal to teens and young adults as well as children.

KEY NEW INITIATIVES

Citizenship Instruction Classes

BPL was awarded a prestigious grant from United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to offer citizenship instruction at four branches for two years. The grant will fund a Library partnership with Catholic Migration Services (CMS) to develop a comprehensive class that prepares legal permanent residents for the U.S. naturalization test and helps them improve their English language skills. Participants at beginning, intermediate and advanced English speaking levels will meet for 11 weeks of classes, with free legal services to be provided through CMS. The classes will serve approximately 125 students per year.

The Library is also working with USCIS to prominently display multilingual immigration and citizenship materials at all of our locations beginning in spring 2015. BPL will be the fourth public library system in the country to create these dedicated New Americans Corners to help immigrants access helpful government, community and Library resources. USCIS will provide training to help BPL staff serve patrons who hope to earn United States citizenship.

Immigration Legal Services

Brooklyn Public Library is one of five New York City host sites for the Immigrant Justice Corps (IJC). Two Kreyol-speaking IJC Community Fellows work under the supervision of immigration attorneys to offer free legal services to our immigrant patrons. The IJC fellows

Arts Programs for Older Adults

The Library's partnership with Lifetime Arts continued in 2014 with a new round of Creative Aging workshops at five branches, and we will launch 11 new class cycles by the end of FY 2015. With funding from the Fan Fox & Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, three of our workshops will be conducted in Spanish, Chinese and Russian for the first time. Each of these instructional arts series runs approximately ten weeks, ending with celebrations that allow participants to share their achievements with friends and family.

In May our Outreach Services staff worked with the Memory Arts Café (MAC) to introduce Poetry for Life, a poetry writing series for older adults. Led by MAC founder and poet Gary Glazner and singer Hannah Reimann, these interactive weekly workshops are offered to seniors who suffer from memory loss. Participants are taught call-and-response poetry techniques and phonological awareness in safe, fun, interactive sessions.

BPL provided storytelling training for 12 older adults at Mill Basin Library through a partnership with Peabody Award-winning radio program *The Moth Radio Hour*. Eight storytellers performed their five-minute stories at The Moth Storytelling Showcase in June. Much like our Creative Aging classes, the workshops provide safe, supportive environments that quickly develop into close-knit, creative communities. The Library's Outreach Services division will continue to partner with *The Moth Radio Hour* to offer storytelling workshops in 2015.

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



In 2014, Brooklyn Public Library's budget was baselined by the City of New York for the first time in seven years. In our testimonies to the New York City Council, the three library systems jointly requested an additional \$65 million in City operating funds. The three systems received an additional \$10 million for FY 2015, with BPL's portion totaling \$2.8 million. While we were very pleased to receive an increase in our budget, New York City's libraries continue to suffer from many years of cuts and neglect.

BPL receives approximately \$15 million per year for capital projects across our system, not nearly enough to meet even the most basic needs of our 59 branches. Our libraries are aging—the average branch is 65 years old—and BPL faces an estimated \$300 million in unfunded capital needs, more than \$80 million of which is for urgent projects. To address this shortfall, we are seeking City funding with New York Public Library and Queens Library for a robust ten-year capital plan. If approved, the plan would provide \$40 million per year for capital improvements over ten years—an unprecedented amount that would enable the Library to commit to capital projects beyond the current fiscal year. As we continue to advocate for the full restoration of our operating budget and the expansion of our capital budget, we are also turning to alternative sources for capital funds, such as the Greenpoint Environmental Education Center and redevelopment projects at our Brooklyn Heights and Sunset Park branches.

2014 PROGRESS

Branch Library Rehabilitation

We renewed efforts to incorporate interior upgrades into critical capital improvements projects at our branches. In the past year the Clinton Hill, Stone Avenue and Arlington branches closed for significant infrastructure improvements and reopened as safer, more inviting facilities with new furniture, paint, signage and unique design elements. In 2015 we will carry out similar upgrades while the Ulmer Park and Eastern Parkway branches close for roof replacements, and Brighton Beach closes for a new HVAC system and new roof. Meanwhile, the initiative to create customized, age-specific spaces is changing to a more organic process of designing flexible work, play and study areas to meet the needs of our patrons and visitors.

Re-envisioning Library Design

Following the release of its Re-envisioning New York's Branch Libraries report, the Center for an Urban Future dispatched several design teams to study library branches throughout New York City and re-imagine how libraries interact with and serve their communities. Design firm Gensler held a series of "visioning" sessions with BPL staff, community stakeholders and patrons at Eastern Parkway Library. The firm incorporated the sessions' findings into a community engagement toolkit that BPL will employ for future Library projects.

Greenpoint Environmental Education Center

In December 2014 the Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund (GCEF) approved BPL's \$5 million grant application to create the Greenpoint Environmental Education Center (GEEC) at Greenpoint Library. The center, scheduled to open in 2018, will add a second floor, accessible green roof and community composting space to the existing branch, increasing public space by more than 80%. The project will qualify for LEED Silver Green Building certification. When complete, the GEEC will be a neighborhood hub for free programs and resources that promote environmental awareness, education and stewardship to community members of all ages. The GCEF is a \$19.5 million grant program created by the State with funds from a settlement with ExxonMobile over the Greenpoint oil spill. BPL will provide roughly \$6 million in matching contributions for the project.

Spaceworks Partnership

Brooklyn Public Library has partnered with Spaceworks to create a unique space on the second floor of Williamsburgh Library. The formerly unused space and staff areas will feature two affordable rehearsal venues for theater, dance and music, which the public can reserve. The branch will offer approximately 5 – 10 hours of free library programming out of these spaces every week. The renovated facility will also host three affordable studios for local artists who will provide special public programs such as open studios, exhibitions and artist demonstrations. A classroom studio will be occupied by L'Ecole des Beaux Arts, a Williamsburg-based arts education provider that will offer 100 hours of free programming to library patrons per year, including collaging classes for children and workshops on bookmaking and printing.

A capital project at Red Hook Library is still in the planning stage. After hearing concerns from the community, BPL will engage the public in a robust dialogue in the coming months as the project continues to take shape.



Greenpoint Environmental Education Center
Artist rendering of proposed facility © Beatty Harvey Coco Architects

KEY NEW INITIATIVES

Brooklyn Heights Library

In 2014, BPL and the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC) reviewed numerous responses to our request for proposals to redevelop Brooklyn Heights Library. BPL and EDC formed a six-person selection committee and solicited public feedback on the committee's seven proposed finalists. In September, the BPL Board of Trustees voted to endorse the committee's choice of Hudson Companies, Inc. as the Library's development partner. Under the agreement, Hudson Companies will work with Marvel Architects to construct a state-of-the-art, 21,500-square-foot library within a 350,000-square-foot mixed-use building, along with 114 units of affordable housing to be located within Community Board 2. During construction, Hudson will cover the cost of interim library space at a nearby location.

This project will replace the existing 53-year-old Brooklyn Heights branch, which requires more than \$9 million in repairs, with a brand new facility. The sale of the site to Hudson will generate \$52 million for BPL, \$40 million of which will be used to complete much-needed renovations at branches throughout the borough. Thus far, three branches have been identified to receive capital project funding from the proceeds of the redevelopment: \$6 million will fund infrastructure upgrades and overall modernization at Walt Whitman Library; \$3.5 million will go to Pacific Library for ADA compliancy upgrades and a new entrance; and \$4 million will support infrastructure upgrades at Washington Irving Library. The proposal will be subject to the land-use review process (ULURP), beginning in 2015, and will provide the public an opportunity for further input. Construction is expected to begin in 2016.

Acquisition Opportunities

The City of New York owns 54 of BPL's 59 locations, while the remaining five are leased from private landlords. The purchase of the leased properties is a priority for the Library, as BPL is often unable to invest in sorely needed improvements at these branches as a result of municipal restrictions on the funding of capital projects at leased properties. In 2014 the City purchased two formerly leased locations, Gravesend and McKinley Park. The Library is planning critical infrastructure improvements at these branches and will continue to work with City leaders to pursue the acquisition of our remaining leased properties as opportunities arise.

Sunset Park Redevelopment Project

Sunset Park Library is one of BPL's busiest branches, and the one-story structure built in 1978 has been in need of expansion and renovation for some time. Working with local elected officials, BPL has proposed the redevelopment of the branch in partnership with nonprofit affordable housing developer Fifth Avenue Committee (FAC). Under the current proposal, the Library will be replaced with a new building at the current location. The proposal includes the construction of 50 units of affordable housing at mixed incomes for Sunset Park's diverse and growing community. The Library will occupy the building's ground floor, basement and part of the second floor, and its size will increase from 12,000 square feet to more than 20,000 square feet. The construction of the core and shell would be done by FAC at no cost to BPL.

BPL is taking steps to identify an interim location to offer Library service during the entire length of construction, and we are dedicated to enabling a community-driven design process. We will look to branch staff and community stakeholders to provide input into the planning of a new Library that will offer vastly more usable space than is available in the existing building.

Rugby Renovation

In 2015 we will begin the renovation of Rugby Library. Built in 1961, the one-story building will become fully ADA-compliant and will receive many key infrastructure upgrades along with a complete interior refurbishment. A new glass façade will provide a more welcoming and sophisticated street-front presence, allowing more natural light into the branch, while the interior layout will be reconfigured to better accommodate the needs of our patrons. The addition of self-check machines and new technology will complete Rugby's transformation into the modern, inspiring library the neighborhood deserves.

STEWARDSHIP



Four & Twenty Blackbirds opened the new café on Pi Day, 2014.

Develop and maintain an adaptive and responsive culture of service



2014 PROGRESS

Openings and Installations

BPL renovated the café space in Central Library's main lobby to allow a new partner, renowned Brooklyn pie shop Four & Twenty Blackbirds, to take over operations. Four & Twenty opened the new café on Pi Day, March 14, 2014, offering patrons a full menu of beverages, snacks and sandwiches in addition to their signature pies.

We installed a new automatic book sorter at Kings Highway Library, and 54 of 59 BPL branches now house self-check machines. The remaining five locations are slated for extensive capital projects, and we will install the machines during construction. At 38 of the branches with self-checkout, patrons can also self-return items, allowing them to instantly remove items from their accounts with the option of printing a receipt to document the return. As of February 2015, patrons are now able to pay fines and donate to the Library by credit card at our library card kiosks.

Sustainability Initiative

The Library reduced its use of printer paper by 50% after instituting default double-sided printing across the system. In 2014, BPL's Human Resources team adopted new timekeeping software, eliminating the old system's paper correction forms, and the Finance Department is transitioning to a paperless invoicing system.

Donor Commitment

Brooklyn Public Library's annual appeal to donors achieved record success in 2014, greatly exceeding our fundraising goal and surpassing last year's campaign revenue by 36%. Key to our success was a generous matching gift challenge from our Board of Trustees. Library supporters responded swiftly and enthusiastically to the challenge, and we reached the match less than 24 hours after it was announced.

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

The Whitman Circle is BPL's new community of high-level donors who generously support BPL's programs through annual membership. Whitman Circle donors enjoy a suite of benefits throughout the year, including readings with celebrated authors in Brooklyn homes, the chance to reserve prime seats at BPL's cultural events and the opportunity to dedicate books in BPL's collection. To date, the Whitman Circle has 43 members, many of whom are new BPL donors.

The Brooklyn Eagles, BPL's young professionals group, teamed up in October 2014 with the Friends of Clinton Hill Library to improve the branch's garden. More than 35 Friends and Eagles came together to weed the entire garden, plant 600 bulbs and paint the Library's front gate. The Eagles are planning similar service projects for 2015.

KEY NEW INITIATIVES

Zipcar Partnership

BPL's innovative partnership with car-sharing network Zipcar provides neighborhoods with a new transportation resource while raising funds for the Library. Our Bedford, Park Slope and Bay Ridge branches are each hosting two Zipcars that the public can rent and return, with Library cardholders receiving a discount. Proceeds from the parking spots leased to Zipcar—previously inaccessible to the public—support the branches' programming budgets.

Community Engagement and Advocacy

Brooklyn Public Library works with communities to meet the needs of Brooklyn's diverse population. We will encourage public participation in planned upgrades to our facilities by convening community advisory committees, hosting design charrettes and soliciting input from neighborhood stakeholders.

Each of our branches has identified a government affairs liaison to support BPL's effort to build strong relationships with the neighborhoods we serve. The liaisons attend and participate in community board meetings and assist the Library's Government Affairs department in the cultivation of partners for joint community projects.

In 2014, BPL invited staff and members of our Friends groups to participate in a training session on grassroots advocacy and activism provided by Urban Librarians Unite. Attendees benefited from training that covered three key areas of successful advocacy: willingness to try, staying on message and overall strategy.

Technology Resource Staff Expansion

With the promotion of 29 clerks, BPL now employs at least one technology resource specialist at every branch, as well as nine regional technology training supervisors. Our technology resource specialists receive ongoing training and professional development to help them serve patrons and develop expertise on the Library's technology. BPL's expanded digital literacy programming and staffing reflect the increasing role of technology in our service to the public.

Mobile Serve

With Mobile Serve, our librarians can help patrons without being stationed behind a desk or having to rely on a desktop computer. Librarians use specially equipped handheld tablets to answer reference questions and help patrons navigate our catalog, pay fines or register for Library cards. After a successful pilot in 2014, BPL plans to launch Mobile Serve across the system in 2015 so that staff at every branch can be more accessible and provide more efficient service to patrons.

Call Center

Patrons contact BPL every day with a wide range of questions. To streamline the process for both patrons and staff, in summer 2015 we will set up an easy-to-remember phone number, 718-YOUR-BPL, which will connect callers to a reorganized Telephone Reference department. The new call center will have expanded hours of service, and staff will receive training and resources to help them answer our patrons' inquiries.

Website Redesign

Brooklyn Public Library's website attracted more than 6.8 million unique visits in FY 2014. In 2016, BPL will debut a fully revamped site that is more visually appealing and better showcases the breadth of our services. The site's responsive design will adapt to fit a PC, laptop, tablet or smartphone screen, while its architecture will house and display information in a more patron-friendly format. Additionally, the site will be more easily searchable and will provide a customized experience based on a user's profile preferences.



Photo © Gregg Richards

The Zipcar partnership bases vehicles at three branches.



Photo © Gregg Richards

The Brooklyn Eagles hosted a rooftop event in July, 2014.

PAST ACCOMPLISHMENTS

EDUCATION

2012: Launch MyLibraryNYC

2013: Open Shelby White and Leon Levy Information Commons

2013: Expand Homework Help program to include all students in grades 1 – 12

2013: Launch partnership to deliver digital literacy programs with BRIC Arts | Media | Bklyn

2013: Launch Start Here: Literacy, an initiative to prepare adult learners for new computer-based GED test requirements

ACCESS

2012: Launch new online catalog, BiblioCommons

2012: Expand collection to support Common Core educational standards and immigrant communities

2012: Expand eBook access beginning with Penguin/3M/ NYPL pilot

2013: Expand Readers Advisory services system-wide

2013: Begin pilot efforts to offer BPL in non-traditional “pop-up” spaces

CULTURE

2012: Install Espresso Book Machine for self-publishing

2012: Launch Brooklyn Visual Heritage website with Brooklyn Historical Society, Brooklyn Museum and Pratt Institute

INCLUSION

2012: Provide four language translations on BPL online catalog

2012: Partner with the Center for Court Innovation to allow parolees to meet with caseworkers in their local communities

2013: Launch outreach services to support older adults, immigrants and emerging communities

2013: Launch program to help immigrants find skilled jobs and careers

2013: Expand Lifetime Arts program for older adults across the borough

SPACE

2012: Partner local artists and design efforts with branches (e.g., Cortelyou exteriors and Kensington solar-powered mobiles)

2014: Launch partnership with Spaceworks

STEWARDSHIP

2012: Establish Office of Strategic Planning

2013: Launch shared technical services partnership with NYPL

2013: Expand BPL performance management and demographic analysis

2013: Launch BPL donor membership campaign

BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

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