



The Voice of the Library Community

New York Library Association

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An Investment in the Ogdensburg Public Library is an Investment in Community

Libraries are well known to be a 'reverse indicator' of economic health. The worse the condition of the economy, the more usage of public libraries increases. And of course, it does – why not drop the Netflix subscription and borrow a DVD? Want a copy of the most-recent James Patterson? Borrow it from the library. Need to get online? Yep, the library has you covered there too. Libraries save patrons money. In 2018, New York State libraries saved residents over a billion dollars compared to what it would have cost to purchase all the same items that were circulated. In fact, it has been estimated that for every \$1 invested in libraries, over \$7 in services and value are returned to the community. (Stats courtesy of the NYS Library)

With the value and undoubtedly growing need for libraries established, it is difficult to fathom cuts to library budgets. Yet the City of Ogdensburg is doing just that – reducing support for the very entity that is best positioned to help the most vulnerable community members weather the recession. Facing that reality, the trustees of the library are forced to turn directly to the voters to endorse ongoing support and funding for library services.

Not shockingly, the largest expense, and most critical piece, of operating a library is staffing. A library without staff is just a repository – devoid of the support, guidance, and curation that make these institutions the gems we all know and love. Without the staff, there is no story-time to develop early literacy skills, no after-school homework help, no connecting a new mother with a peer-support group, no job search assistance, nor tech-support. Yes, the access to materials and the internet saves patrons' dollars, but access to the library staff enriches their lives. Further, maintaining minimum staffing levels is a matter of safety, for staff and patrons alike. For a building as large as the Ogdensburg Public Library, it would be flat out irresponsible to operate without enough staff members present to ensure that all areas can receive adequate oversight and supervision.

To the voters of Ogdensburg, contemplating their vote on library funding on Tuesday, May 18; Don't be fooled by the Mayor and those who see the library as just a repository of books. Ask your neighbors who rely on the access and services that their library provides. Know that no other community investment provides so much to so many for so little. Embrace the best the community can be and continue to invest in the Ogdensburg Public Library for the tomorrow we all want.

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