

Donna Conkling

From: Mayor
Sent: Thursday, January 21, 2016 3:04 PM
To: Donna Conkling
Cc: Steve Pappalardo; Robert Cole; David Lee (dlee.trustee@gmail.com); Bill Stern; dpekarek@verizon.net; Marc Samwick (marc.samwick@verizon.net); Carl Finger; Matt Callaghan
Subject: Fw: Campaign for Scarsdale Public Library

FYI. JM

From: Mayor
Sent: Thursday, January 21, 2016 3:03 PM
To: May Cowan
Subject: Re: Campaign for Scarsdale Public Library

Dear Ms. Cowan -- Thank you for your email.

Very truly yours, Jon Mark

From: May Cowan <may.cowan@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 21, 2016 2:19 PM
To: Mayor
Subject: Campaign for Scarsdale Public Library

Dear Mr. Mayor,

I ran into a friend, Dara Gruenberg, in town last week. She told me about the work that she's doing to renovate and rejuvenate the library. I couldn't be more excited to hear that this is underway.

When my family and I moved here in 2007, I was struck by the differences between the community we'd left in Brooklyn and the one we found here. In Brooklyn, when I took my twins to story time, the library was packed with people. We had to go early to guarantee we'd get in. We didn't really know the librarian at all -- how could she possibly know the kids in a crowd that size? We sat with friends and made some feeble attempts to listen. We were physically far away from the reader and from the book and the pictures. My kids ignored the books and toddled around and looked at the shelves around them.

Obviously that is a far cry from what happens at story time at the Scarsdale library. We moved in August of 2007, when town was empty. We didn't know a soul and there didn't seem to be one left here. We went to the library and found signs of civilization. That was 8 years ago; since then, we have had two more children, and we continue to go to the library. My husband and I participate in the Spelling Bee (albeit with no success, but we keep trying.) We contribute

what seems to be an endless number of overdue fines. We take our kids to the events - Mad Science, Exotic Animals, Lego night, movies, etc. I take my kids when they are sick and need something other than a screen to fill their day. I send my kids on a walk there when they need to get out of the house. We go in the winter, when its too cold to play in the park and all of the other activities in the area require advance planning, reservations, tickets or price of admission. We go in the summer, when they're bored of the pool but still want to get out. We almost always run into someone we know.

My husband and I, and our kids, are loyal and devoted fans of Eileen and Aisha, librarians in the Childrens' Room. They are wonderful assets to the library. They know my kids. They know kid and tween books, old and new. They know which books are great and which are junk. My kids approach them independently and get help and guidance and suggestions on books they would like -- suggestions they'll take far more readily than they will take mine. Both deserve a raise, in my thoroughly biased opinion. (Not in your purview, I know -- I'm just saying.....)

I understand that there is resistance to the plan to update the library -- that people have questioned its very existence: in the age of the Internet, how relevant is a library?

I would counter that in the age of the Internet, the Library is more needed than ever before. The Internet offers vast, unrestricted universe of information -- some true, some preposterous and plenty in between. We need experts in books and in information more than ever before, either to help people find a needle in a haystack, or to help people, most especially Scarsdale students, realize that the needle they have found is bogus. We need a gathering place for our children that doesn't involve shopping or eating and is still considered a treat. The library is a community gathering place that attracts and retains the interest of toddlers, high schoolers and retirees. With all the time, effort and funds we, as a town, choose to dedicate to our schools, I can't imagine that we would also choose not to dedicate time, effort and funds to our library. Education and books go hand in hand.

My entire family supports the library and we very much hope that the town will as well.

Thanks for listening, and stay warm,

May Cowan
1197 Post Road