

Your address:

City Hall
25 Dorrance Street
Providence RI 02903

Dear Councilor:

I am shocked to hear that Providence Public Library is again threatening to lay off the branch children's specialists. PPL is saying that the City's funding for these positions will run out by March and the Library has seemingly been unwilling to allocate the necessary library funds and/or do the necessary fundraising to save these services for the children of Providence.

Loss of the seven children's specialists will have very serious consequences for all the branches, especially the smaller ones, which now have three staff persons and will be reduced to two. At these branches, all children's services and programs will have to be cut. Staff members at the three larger branches will also be stretched too thin to provide the level of services they offer now.

The children of Providence will suffer. There will be little reason for children to come to their neighborhood libraries after school, as the programs which made their library visits meaningful will no longer be offered.

Only \$100,000 is needed to extend the children's specialists' jobs through the rest of this fiscal year. But the reputation of the PPL is such that many people are unwilling to contribute to the PPL since contributions to it get buried in the PPL's Foundation's endowment and are not used to fund the needed programs.

I understood that the Library and the City signed an agreement last summer in which the Mayor promised to serve as an honorary chair of a fund-raising appeal for the branches. Nearly six months have passed since Mayor Cicilline signed the Memorandum of Agreement, and there has been no fund-raising appeal so far. Now is the time for the Mayor, with the help of the City Council, to begin that effort. Perhaps if the City can create an appeal for the branches which is independent of the PPL's foundation, we can finally have some security for branch operations. People would be willing to help raise money if they knew it would be applied directly to saving children's services at the branches.

I know that you and all the City Council members are sincerely concerned about library services in the City of Providence, and that you are anxious to provide safe, meaningful and educational programs for neighborhood children. We need a concerted effort to avoid this disaster in the making.

Sincerely,