



# THE STORY

WINTER/SPRING 2009 VOLUME 4 NO.1

## STATE GRANTS FUND LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

*Written by Megan Bowman*

AFTER SPANISH, WHAT IS THE MOST FREQUENTLY SPOKEN FOREIGN LANGUAGE AMONG FAMILIES IN THE WEST CHESTER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT?

HOW MANY PEOPLE IN NORTH AMERICA HAVE SOME SORT OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENT?

WCPL PATRONS LOG HOW MANY HOURS OF PC USE IN THE LIBRARY EACH YEAR?

These are the types of questions that libraries like WCPL might ask when thinking about what services or book collections could benefit from a grant offered by the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). Over the past year, WCPL has been the fortunate beneficiary of several grants that have enhanced library collections.

The goal of the DCED is to foster opportunities for business and communities to succeed and thrive in a global economy, thereby enabling Pennsylvanians to achieve a superior quality of life. The department makes and administers grants across the state in support of projects large and small that have a direct benefit to a community. Grant applications are supported by local legislators on behalf of their constituents.

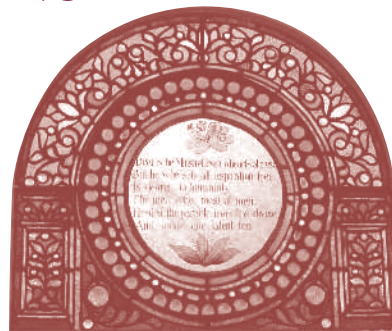
DCED grants have supported a number of WCPL projects. For example, a DCED grant was instrumental in the library's

2004-2005 renovation and expansion campaign and, more recently, WCPL received funding support to help upgrade PCs, update the large print collection, and add materials in Mandarin Chinese to the library's collections. Grants were supported by **Representative Chris Ross**, **Representative Barbara McIlvaine Smith**, and **Senator Andy Dinniman**, respectively. We greatly appreciate their endorsement and support.

Speaking of support, it's important to note just some of the reasons WCPL is considered to be such an important facility in the community, and a worthy candidate to receive DCED grant funding. Just look at some of the residents who rely upon our services:

- Newcomers to the area often look for a local library;
- Parents look to their public library to help with school reading and homework assignments;
- People of all ages rely on the library to provide resources in support of all sorts of life-long learning pursuits;
- Job seekers often need library resources, PCs and resume/cover-letter how-to resources, in their job search; and
- In a sluggish economy, residents rely upon a library to find a good book, a movie or music to entertain them for a fraction of the cost if they were to buy these items new.

Clearly, the demand for library services continues to rise as the economy  
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WHAT'S INSIDE?

**MARK THE DATE!**  
**Fourth Annual**  
**Literacy Heroes Breakfast**  
Friday, April 17, 2009, 7:30-9:30 a.m.  
Ballroom, Longwood Gardens  
Log onto [www.literacyheroes.com](http://www.literacyheroes.com)  
for ticket information.

**Check Out WCPL's Blog...**  
Take a look at  
<http://wcpublishlibrary.blogspot.com>

# STATE GRANTS FUND LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

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continues to fall. As library personnel planned for the coming year, staff and volunteers thought long and hard about what programs would best benefit the community, and then submitted funding proposals for each of those issues. Primary focal points include those questions posed at the beginning of this article, and the answers to those questions offer yet another example of why DCED grants provide such vital support to the library and our ability to serve the community.

There are approximately 10 million people in North America who have a visual impairment. For many of them, reading is still possible as long as they have large print books available. WCPL's large print collection, now updated with bestselling titles and current fiction, is increasingly important to area residents. For many, it enables them to read in general. Other patrons just like the larger print because they can "get away with reading without reading-glasses!" The \$10,000 two-year DCED grant is helping WCPL reinvigorate this collection.

With more than 35 foreign languages spoken among WCASD students, Mandarin Chinese is the second most prevalent. WCPL's new collection of children's and adult books and language learning audio materials, funded by a \$5,000 DCED grant, offers a number of interesting possibilities to patrons. The children's books allow Mandarin-speaking parents to help their children be truly bilingual, both speaking and reading their parents' native tongue as well as English. Others can use the materials to assist their efforts to learn Mandarin. In the globally-connected world of today, the ability to speak and function with a foreign language opens doors to understanding and commerce for everyone.

Believe it or not, WCPL patrons log an astounding 12,000 hours per year on our PCs, and that number is rapidly growing! Cardholders who use the library's nine public PCs and a laptop access a variety of programs and services. They often are looking for jobs, creating a resume, catching up with their email, accessing documents,

or finishing school projects. Some patrons have no other access to PCs or the Internet; some are in the library because their home PC or printer is broken, or their Internet connection is down. The 2007-2008 \$6,000 DCED grant enabled WCPL to update all the PCs in the building and purchase laptops for use in special programs and as backups to the desktop PCs.

So, the next time you stop by the library take a look at some of these grant-funded items, both new and old. They are evidence of tax and donor dollars at work in your community, providing a tangible return-on-investment of everyone's hard work.

DCED grants certainly have played a vital role in enabling the library to expand its collection, and we appreciate the financial support greatly. We also continue to rely heavily upon donations from individuals, corporations and foundations, to assist us as the community's demand for service continues to increase. ❖

## Community Prepares for Fourth Annual Literacy Heroes Breakfast

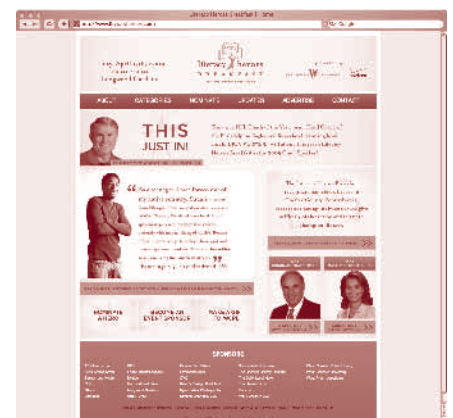
*by Megan Bowman*



Once again, more than 250 guests are anticipated to come together on Friday, April 17, for the Fourth Annual Literacy Heroes Breakfast at Longwood Gardens. Back by popular demand, this event will once again celebrate and recognize hometown heroes who have done something exceptional to champion the cause of literacy. The event is being co-hosted by West Chester Public Library and Verizon.

Some event highlights include:  
**HONORARY CHAIRPERSON:**  
Governor Edward G. Rendell  
**GUEST SPEAKER:**  
NFL Coach of the Year, Dick Vermeil  
**MASTER OF CEREMONIES:**  
Morning News Anchor,  
Tamala Edwards, 6ABC Action News

Nearly 90 nominations were submitted in response to this year's community-wide "Call for Nominations." Event sponsors had the difficult task of choosing just one award recipient per category, and names of those being recognized will be released to the general public on April 17 through a special section produced by The Daily Local News, as well as on the event website, [www.literacyheroes.com](http://www.literacyheroes.com).



For more information on the event, including how you can be added to the seating wait list, please log onto the event website, [www.literacyheroes.com](http://www.literacyheroes.com), or contact the library at 610-696-1721

Currently, the library is managing a wait list for seating. For more information on the event, including how you can be added to the seating wait list, please log onto the event website, [www.literacyheroes.com](http://www.literacyheroes.com), or contact the library at 610-696-1721. ❖

# President's Column: Libraries in Tough Times

by Howard Sundwall



THIS LETTER WAS PUBLISHED IN THE DAILY LOCAL NEWS ON JANUARY 1, 2009.

The current budget controversy in Philadelphia is another indication of the difficulties facing government at all levels during these

hard economic times. I sympathize with Mayor Nutter who is forced to make tough choices on where to allocate limited funds.

However, as a supporter of libraries and particularly as President of the Board of Trustees of West Chester Public Library, I cannot agree that libraries should be put on the chopping block for closure. I applaud those concerned Philadelphia citizens who are taking extraordinary actions to keep their libraries open.

*“I urge residents of Chester County to continue or to begin to support their local libraries... No one wants to see a library close or severely cut back hours...”*

Here in Chester County, the situation is not much different. Libraries are tightening their belts like never before as greater pressures are put on all sources of funding, whether they be state, county or local. Additionally, our private sources of funding – generous patrons and local businesses, who contribute fully one third of WCPL’s operating budget every year – are also

feeling the pinch and are threatening to cut back, or have already done so.

Ironically, it is during hard times that libraries are most needed and library use increases. We have definitely seen this at West Chester: more circulation, more patrons seeking computer time to find jobs, more people seeking to refresh their skills or find new ones. Library usage in the latter half of this year has increased by 20% over 2007.

I urge residents of Chester County to continue or to begin to support their local libraries so that we do not reach the same state of affairs as Philadelphia has. No one wants to see a library close or severely cut back hours, and it should not take a fiscal crisis to bring people out to support the fine work and the public service that these institutions provide. ❖

## Library Partner Feature: The Pledging Tree Foundation

FROM TIME TO TIME, WE’LL FEATURE A COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION THE LIBRARY PARTNERS WITH TO PROVIDE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO OUR PATRONS.

*Should I spend my paycheck on the movies or save up for my own car? How can I have fun but still save some money for the future? Isn’t budgeting something for people that have a lot of money?* In these uncertain economic times, it is more important than ever for middle and high school students to learn the basics of budgeting, saving, and developing healthy spending habits. The challenge is to present that information in a way that is interesting and relevant to today’s teens.

The Pledging Tree Foundation is pleased

to partner with the West Chester Public Library to offer financial workshops for teens. Started in 2007, by Downingtown senior, Prerna Singh, the Pledging Tree Foundation is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote disciplined savings in financially challenged families. Originally serving adults, this unique relationship has allowed the growing organization to expand its workshops and educate teens about important financial topics. Students in grades 6th through 12th learn critical budgeting skills that will not only allow them to save their hard earned cash, but will also promote long-term healthy spending and saving habits.

For adults, The Pledging Tree Foundation is two-fold in its purpose. Similar to the teen program, their first goal is to educate

people about sound financial planning and saving through workshops that are offered to the public on a quarterly basis. Highly qualified financial advisors cover a variety of topics, from credit card debt recovery to creating a savings plan and are available to answer questions at the end of each session. For families with a household income of \$40,000 or less, a unique matching program is available. Approved families are encouraged to deposit \$100 (or as much as they are able) each month for one year. During that time, The Pledging Tree Foundation matches the deposit (up to \$100), allowing families to get a jump start on their savings.

For more information about The Pledging Tree Foundation, visit [www.thepledgingtree.org](http://www.thepledgingtree.org). ❖

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**WCPL MISSION STATEMENT**

*West Chester Public Library provides  
a welcoming and open environment  
that enriches the community with its  
resources and technology as patrons pursue  
knowledge for pleasure, work, and life.*

# BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

## FEBRUARY TO JULY 2009 SCHEDULE

**ALL ARE WELCOME!**  
Feel free to bring your lunch.  
The group meets in the  
Library Community Room  
on the first floor every 3rd  
Wednesday of the month  
from 12:30 – 1:30pm

FEBRUARY 18

*The Golden Compass*

Philip Pullman

MARCH 18

*The Story of Edgar Sawtelle*

David Wroblewski

APRIL 15

*The World Without Us*

Alan Weisman

MAY 20

*Last Night at the Lobster*

Stewart O'Nan

JUNE 17

*The Guernsey Literary  
& Potato Peel Pie Society*

Mary Ann Shaffer &

Annie Burrows

JULY 15

*One Thousand  
White Women:*

*The Journals of  
Mary Dodd*

Jim Fergus

