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**The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Youth, Education, and Libraries Committee
Thursday, March 23, 2023 - 6:30 PM
This meeting was conducted via Zoom**

Board Members Present: : Vanessa Aronson, Taína Borrero, Addeson Lehv, and Judy Schneider

1. Updates from representatives of local branches of The New York Public Library and discussion on proposed budget cuts

- a. Maggie Barbour, the Library Manager of the 67th Street Library, gave an overview of the New York Public Library's services and focus and shared some highlights of upcoming programming at the 67th Street Library
 - A new college and career pathways hub at the 67th Street branch featuring staff and programs specifically geared toward high school students looking to continue their education after high school (available Monday through Thursday after school)
 - Children's programs focused on early literacy skills.
 - Adult Programs, including two book clubs and a resume writing critique service on Saturdays.
 - Community Members can contact Ms. Barbour to learn more about program opportunities at maggiebarbour@nypl.org
- b. Nicole Brown, the Library Manager of the 96th Street Library also highlighted some upcoming programs at her branch, including:
 - Children's programs focusing on early literacy for kids.
 - WeBop: an 8 week program teaching children about jazz music.
 - Bilingual Storytime.
 - Teen Advisory Group and crafts for teens
 - Adults programs, including a classic film series every Thursday night in April.
 - Community Members can contact Ms. Brown to learn more about program opportunities at the 96th Street Library at nicolebrown@nypl.org
- c. Representatives from the Yorkville Library and Webster Library were unable to attend
- d. Ms. Barbour shared that the New York Public Library, Brooklyn Public Library, and Queen's Library are facing potential budget cuts totaling \$52.7 million in the FY24 preliminary budget. These budget cuts would severely impact ability to provide critical services and resources to patrons during the regular hours. On March 20, the heads of the three library systems testified at the City Council's Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations about the importance of properly funding libraries. Ms. Barbour encouraged members of the Board and community to participate in a campaign to send letters in support of public libraries to City Council Members by visiting www.InvestinLibraries.org. Supporters can also use the social media hashtag #nocutstolibraries to voice their support online. Starting in May, library branches will

- have letter-writing stations where patrons can sign their name to a physical letter. The final budget will be negotiated by the City Council and the Mayor by June 30th.
2. Discussion about “Songs for Littles” with Phaedra Nowak, Speech Language Pathologist at New York Center for Infants and Toddlers, Inc.
 - a. Ms. Nowak gave an overview of the New York State Early Intervention Program, a New York State program that provides wide range services to children under three years old, including: speech therapy to support communication skills; occupational therapy to support fine motor and sensory processing skills; physical therapy to support gross motor skills; and special instruction supporting other academic skills. To qualify for services, an evaluation is conducted by the state in the child’s home at no cost to their family. When a child qualifies, these services are provided at no cost and can take place at home or at an early intervention center. Ms. Nowak further discussed the impact that Covid lockdowns in 2020 had on the Early Intervention Program, including moving many services online. During this time, a New York City public school music teacher and mother of a little boy with a speech delay, Rachel Griffin Accurso (known as “Miss Rachel”) created an age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate YouTube show featuring real people and original music called *Songs for Littles*. As *Songs for Littles* has been receiving a lot of recent press coverage, Ms. Nowak gave an overview of how, from her perspective as an early-childhood speech therapist, *Songs for Littles* could potentially serve as one tool to help support a child’s speech and language development. She explained that the elements that make *Songs for Littles* stand out include Miss Rachel’s use of big expressions, gestures, short phrases that are heavy on high-frequency content words, pointing to (and video closeups) to her mouth, and use of simple, developmentally appropriate storylines and songs. Caregivers with concerns about their child’s development should call the Early Intervention Regional Office (Manhattan: 212-436-0900) to be matched with a Case Worker who will arrange for an evaluation at no cost to the family.
 3. Old Business – The YEL committee will be following up on the letter that was previously sent to Governor Hochul encouraging NY State to reach a resolution that allows the Knickerbocker Greys to stay in the Armory.
 4. New Business – The YEL April meeting has been canceled

The meeting adjourned at 7:09PM

Vanessa Aronson and Taína Borrero, Co-Chairs