

## What You Should Know About the Rutherford Public Library and Proposed Municipal Budget Cuts

- **Drastically Reduced Hours** - With the recent reduction of library hours, access to the public library is now limited to only four hours on weekends. In addition to reduced hours on an ongoing basis, the proposed budget cut will result in the Library being closed for six weeks in the second half of 2010.
- **Short Shrift for Our Library** - In Rutherford, the public library is the place to be! **In 2009, the Library recorded more than a quarter of a million visitors, an average of 750 people per day.** The Library is an anchor of Park Avenue and draws hundreds of people to our commercial district on a daily basis. Half of the Library's staffers who are currently covered by health benefits will lose those benefits if the funding for the library is reduced by 20-30% as proposed. All of the staff will lose six weeks of pay during furloughs. This will have a devastating impact on dedicated employees who, even after many years of service, receive very modest wages. The Library is the only department in the Borough being asked to absorb such a large cut.
- **An Agent of Recovery** - The Rutherford Public Library is an agent of recovery. The Library's 25 computers are in use all day, every day by people looking for jobs and applying for benefits. Even today's entry-level jobs require online applications, and many of our residents do not have access to high-speed Internet in their homes. And since the Library is the only place in town for free wi-fi service, it serves as a "home office away from home" for members of our community. Strong public libraries will result in a quicker recovery for New Jersey.



*The Library's 25 computers are in continuous use from opening until closing time.*

- **Popular Community Programming Cancelled** - Programs previously offered on Thursdays, Fridays, and weekends have been cancelled. The popular Friday Family Fun Nights have been discontinued. These monthly performances featuring children's theater, puppet shows, concerts, magic shows, and even spectacular giant bubbles were the hottest ticket in town, typically attracting more than 150 people per event. Many programs for adults, including the evening classes in English-as-a-Second Language, will also be discontinued.
- **A Great Return on Investment** - The Rutherford Public Library has excellent value for the borough's taxpayers! The portion of the annual tax bill that goes to pay for library service is about 54 cents per day. Over the last year, the average value of materials borrowed by Rutherford's 12,324 library users was \$808 per person. ⇒

- **A Unique Role** - The Rutherford Public Library is our community's only multi-generational, non-denominational community center. More than a dozen community organizations meet in the Library's meeting rooms on a regular basis. The recent reduction in library hours has already forced some groups to cancel meetings.

*Melissa McHugh, leader of Daisy Troop 431, one of the community organizations that meet at the Library. Because budget cuts have resulted in reduced library hours, the meeting schedule for Daisy Troop 431 and other groups has been interrupted.*



- **Teen Central** - During after school hours, the Library functions as a teen homework center. On most afternoons, all of the tables in the Children's Room, Young Adult Room and the Main Reading Room are in use.



*The Library is "Teen Central" after school every day, but from 5 pm on Fridays until 10 am on Mondays, the Library is now only open for a total of four hours.*

- **Valuable Resources Threatened** - Residents come to the Library to do research, to learn about local history, to research their family tree, to have distance education exams proctored, to read books to their children, to learn English, to attend book discussions and poetry workshops, to ask information experts for help finding answers, to attend community meetings, to finish homework after school when parents are not at home, and sometimes just to gather in a friendly place that promotes the sharing of ideas and a lifelong love of learning. Funding for materials, programs, and services will be drastically reduced.
- **Gateway to More Than Five Million Books** - Last, but certainly not least, the Rutherford Public Library is a lending library. Through the Bergen County Cooperative Library System (BCCLS), our residents have access to more than five million books and thousands of movie DVDs and music CDs. The Rutherford Public Library is the 8<sup>th</sup> busiest library in all of Bergen County.