

submitted by  
Charles Ziegler

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## ***Presentation to the Alexandria City Council***

***March 18, 2017***

Mayor Silberberg, Vice-Mayor Wilson, Members of the City Council,

My name is Chuck Ziegler, Vice-President for Advocacy of the Friends of the Beatley Central Library. I suppose by this time you've seen quite enough of me during Public Hearings to advocate for our Public Libraries, but I did not want to forgo this opportunity to remind you briefly of why our Public Libraries deserve your strong support in the FY2018 City budget.

As the Public Hearing on the budget last Monday made abundantly clear, there are numerous worthy—and loud—demands on the City's financial resources in a tight budget year. You have difficult choices to make. But support for our Public Libraries is a good choice, as they give our citizens *excellent* value for the resources allocated to them.

Our Public Libraries provide many means for self-improvement and education, available to *every citizen* of Alexandria, from the youngest to the oldest, thus supporting the "Healthy & Thriving Residents" focus area of the City's budget. For example, the 2016 summer reading program for children and teens was launched with the objective of combating the well-known "learning loss" phenomenon in school children during the summer months, by promoting reading and learning during that time. Our Public Libraries hosted educational events at all its facilities and at area recreation centers. In addition to cultural programs, special events included a two-week "Science in the Summer" workshop, and a Google Maker Camp. A total of **3,300** children (ages infant -17) registered for the Summer Reading Initiative. From June through August, **126** special events were offered, with **11,105** children and adults in attendance. A total of **7,620** books were logged by participants.

The Friends of the Beatley Central Library do their full part in actively supporting our libraries and demonstrating our commitment to them. Last year, we raised over **\$46,000**, funds that went to supplement activities such as the 2016 summer reading program. Today, after this address, I'll be going home, changing into appropriate attire, and joining some two-dozen other Beatley Friends in preparing for our Spring Book Sale, a major fundraising event, which begins on March 21. More evidence of citizen support of our Public Libraries.

I hope that your decision, even in the face of this challenging financial environment, will be to partner with us in giving strong support our Public Libraries. It is a wise investment.