

—WESTCHESTER'S OLDEST AND MOST RESPECTED NEWSPAPERS—

SOUNDVIEW RISING

Vol 29 Number 34

www.RisingMediaGroup.com

Friday, August 20, 2010

New Rochelle Public Library

The New Rochelle Public Library has announced that it is one of 35 libraries in New York State to receive funding to become a New York Public Computer Center, and will be receiving \$244,000 over the next two years.

This grant is made possible by the New York State Library, a unit of the Office of Cultural Education (OCE) within the New York State Education Department (NYSED), which was awarded \$9.5 million in a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to expand computer access in public libraries across New York State.

The funding is being provided through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act's (ARRA) Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP). The federal stimulus funding of \$9,521,150, and an additional \$5,418,370 in matching funds, will be used to create 30 Public Access Computer Centers in public libraries and five E-mobile Computer Training Units.

The initiative will allow the New Rochelle Public Library to increase public access to high speed broadband services, expand services to vulnerable populations (unemployed, underemployed, non-English speakers, seniors, disabled, etc.), provide technical support and other resources to support job search and career advancement through community anchor institutions such as libraries, and advance the use of E-services for training, employment, digital literacy and education.

"This is a tremendous opportunity for the library and New Rochelle community," said Greg Varian, president of the library's Board of Trustees. "The library has a long tradition of providing a wide array of essential resources to our citizens. This funding will expand those resources and it will increase the level of services our staff can provide to residents with the greatest needs."

The library will use the funding to create a BTOP Help Center on the second floor of the library, with professional staff to assist with job searches, filing e-forms, accessing social services and utilizing technology to connect with needed resources. Additional computer stations and trained computer instructors and assistants will allow for expanded training and one-on-one guidance. Classes on improving job opportunities, starting a business and other employment-related support will be also offered on a regular basis.

The New York State Library, within NYSED, worked with partner libraries throughout the state and the New York State Office of the Chief Information Officer/Office for Technology (CIO/OFT) to submit the proposal for the grant. In order to participate in this matching grant, partner libraries must make an in-kind contribution to support the project. The total in-kind match is \$5.4 million.

"CIO/OFT is very proud to continue supporting the innovative," said Dr. Melodie Mayberry-Stewart, New York State CIO, director of the Office for Technology, and chair of the Broadband Development and Deployment Council. "In these tough economic times, access to free resources is critical for New York's citizens. Many times, computers located in libraries are the only point of broadband contact for certain citizens. Those who do not own a computer or have access to the internet often go to the library, where both are available for free. And for those who have never used a computer, help will be available. These grants will help ensure our libraries can continue to provide high-speed, reliable internet services and digital literacy training programs for our communities."

The New Rochelle Public Library is located at One Library Plaza in New Rochelle. For more information, call 914-632-7878, ext. 34.