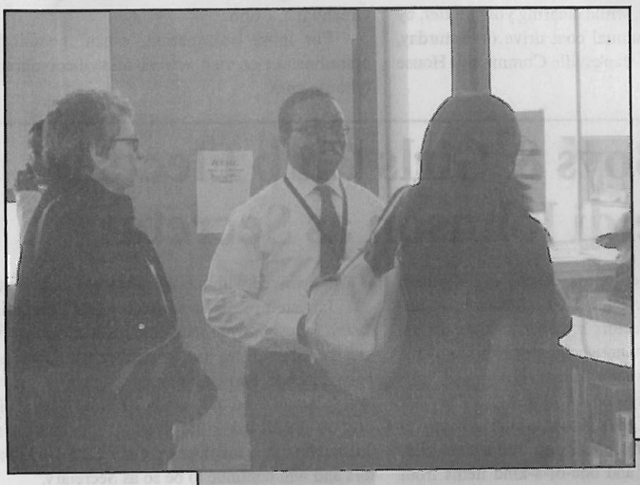
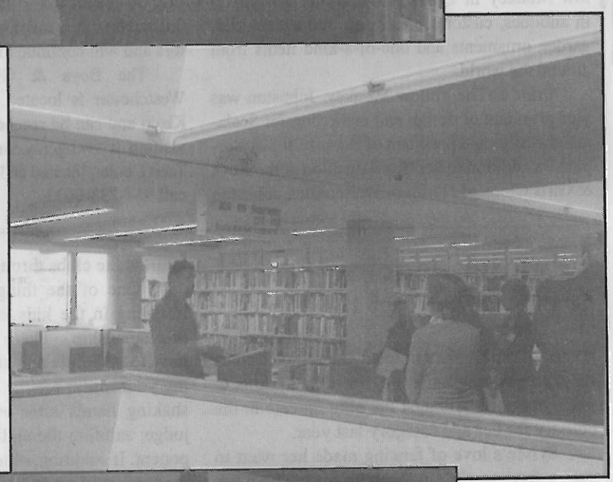
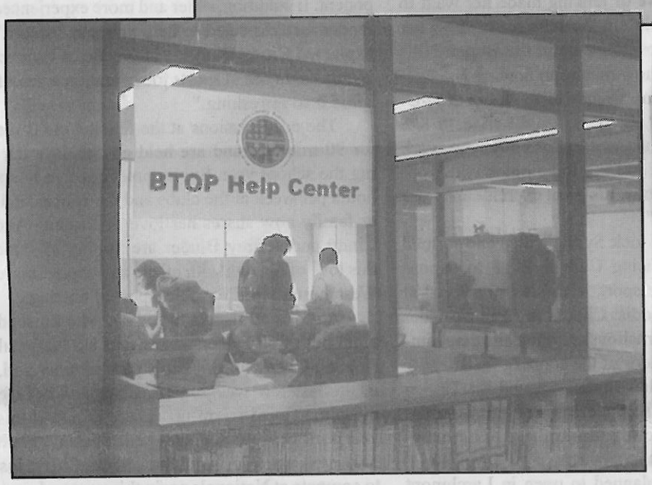
New Rochelle Public Library Launches Computer Center



Librarian Daniel Ogyiri leading a tour of the new facilities



Tom Geoffino addressing guests



The new BTOP Help Center provides one-on-one assistance in finding a job and connecting with essential resources

Soundview Rising
FRIDAY, JANUARY 7, 2011

New Rochelle Public Library's (NRPL) Public Computer Center (PCC) was officially opened on Monday, December 6, with a ceremony and ribbon cutting attended by Mayor Noam Bramson and other dignitaries, patrons and invited guests.

The state grant for the PCC has allowed the library to develop an extensive additional layer to NRPL's services, programs, facilities and technology, all designed to help patrons find and keep jobs.

These enhancements were described in remarks by NRPL Director Tom Geoffino, followed by comments from NRPL Board of Trustees President Greg Varian and Bramson.

Once the new computer area on the second floor was officially inaugurated with a ribbon-cutting, librarians conducted tours of the new Help Center, increased capabilities of the third floor Computer Lab and a new Learning Lab in the library's lower level.

The NRPL is one of 35 libraries in New York State to receive funding to become a PCC 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 within the New York State Education Department (NYSED), which was awarded $9.5 million in a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce's 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).

Since receiving the funding, the NRPL has added 20 additional computers with high speed broadband service and created the two new computer areas and enhanced a third. These computer areas are for the exclusive use of adult patrons who are looking for jobs or doing research and allow for extended periods of use (up to two hours.)

A job search coach and a social services assistant have scheduled hours to provide one-on-one assistance and have aided several dozen patrons in the four weeks the BTOP Help Center has been open. Four computer assistants and librarians are also available to guide patrons requiring help in setting up e-mail accounts, master basic computer sills, study for the GED and employment tests online and complete e-forms.

The library has increased its free computer training sessions from nine sessions per month to 27 per month. Seven sessions are now offered in Spanish.

These services and programs are promoted through community-wide outreach efforts and a new monthly schedule and calendar devoted to the activities of the PCC-BTOP, which is available in the library's lobby or by clicking on the BTOP logo at www.nrpl.org.