

Montgomery County Marks 60 Years of Library Service

Libraries avoided the deepest of budget cuts in May, got a little help from their 'Friends' on Friday.

By [Michael Steenstra](#) | [Email the author](#) | June 6, 2011

Montgomery County Public Libraries commemorated 60 years of serving county residents with a celebration on Friday evening at the [Rockville Memorial Library](#).

The celebration presented "a great opportunity to thank our volunteers and to thank our staff," even in the midst of a tough year for the library system, said Parker Hamilton, the system's director.

The libraries' budget of \$28.5 million for fiscal 2012, which begins July 1, is a decrease of \$2.8 million, or a 1.6 percent cut from the current budget. MCPL will lose 14 positions under [the county's fiscal 2012 operating budget, which was approved on May 26](#).

Despite the funding decrease and position reduction, library officials were grateful for being spared even deeper cuts by the budget axe. [On March 15, County Executive Isiah Leggett proposed a \\$26.1 million libraries budget](#), which represented [a 9.7 percent reduction in total funding and the loss of 32 positions](#).

Through the efforts of Hamilton, library staff and volunteers, concerned citizens, and an amendment proposed by Leggett (D), some funding was restored.

Leggett delivered a speech at Friday's commemoration that celebrated the hard work of library staff and volunteers.

A high point of the celebration was the announcement of a \$30,000 donation to county libraries by the nonprofit [Friends of the Library](#).

"It's the one service that we have in the county that is for all ages and for all economic backgrounds," Sue Shaw, president of the Potomac chapter of Friends of the Library, said of the county library system.

Citizens play a very important role in making sure that the library stays around for another 60 years, Shaw said.

"People say they love the library but only come once in a blue moon," she said. "This is something people can do [to show support]: They can come in and use the library."

County libraries offer thousands of books that can be borrowed by county residents with a free library card. They also offer a quiet study environment, child's story hours, meet-the-author events and other free programs.