

Council President Katz, members of the Council. I'm Tom Thomson, President of the Board of Trustees of Friends of the Library, Montgomery County.

Our libraries are going to need friends more than ever in the days ahead. Fortunately, they can count on friends and supporters across our county. For instance, they have stalwart supporters here in the Council. We take comfort in that and even greater comfort in the actions you have already taken, in particular the Public Health Emergency Grant program and Resolution 19-388.

The grant program will provide assistance to non-profit groups and we are grateful.

We will continue to seek ways to help MCPL even as we face revenue losses with our closed bookstores. We are pleased that earlier this month we were able to use existing funds to give MCPL a grant enabling their leadership to strengthen their highly popular digital offerings by purchasing Zoom licenses for all branches, thereby ensuring full programming that meets their privacy and confidentiality standards.

With Resolution 19-388, we welcome the Council's determination that our departments be able to provide services at the same level as in fiscal year 2020, even as it focuses on COVID 19. We support that determination to keep our libraries up and running, digitally for now, and then when they can open their doors and make their resources, programs and joys available to us as we recover.

Finally, special thanks to Councilmember Will Jawando, the Council's Library Lead. We are disappointed that his determination to visit every library branch is on hold. But we are pleased to see him reading to our children every day and proud to partner with him on that.

These readings delight the children -- and their hard-pressed parents -- and demonstrate how libraries promote the literacy programs so

important to getting our children ready for kindergarten—a priority that we look forward to promoting once again.

These are difficult times. The Friends will continue to work with our friends on the Council to ensure that our libraries can continue to bring us essential learning -- whether their physical doors are closed or open.

Thank you