



Watha T. Daniel / Shaw Library Study Group Spring 2008 Community Survey Results

In recent years, the DC Public Library system (DCPL) has embarked on a process of library transformations for neighborhood branch libraries under the leadership of the Chief Librarian and Board of Library Trustees (BOLT).

Ward 2 DC residents, civic leaders, and community-based organizations have been very excited to know that a new Watha T. Daniel / Shaw Library will be built and opened by the Spring of 2010. What hasn't been exciting is the community engagement process conducted by DCPL and overseen by the BOLT.

Ward 2 residents have been largely left-out of any discussion regarding a new Shaw library. DCPL has been hosting library meeting since the Winter of 2007 and these meetings have been lightly attended for many reasons including the fact that they are held at night on randomly planned dates (four meetings) with little notice to the public. Additionally, there have been no child-care services provided so parents can participate in these meetings meaningfully and the youth living in the neighborhood have never been invited to participate either.

Ward 2 residents decided to come together to figure out how to better engage the community to maximize feedback so that architects of the new Shaw library could truly anticipate and understand the needs and suggestions of a broader spectrum of Ward 2 residents. This group came to be known as the Shaw Library Study Group and is an arm of the District Dynamos, an initiative seeking more community oversight of the DC Library system.

Using the model of the Benning Dynamo library survey (<http://www.districtdynamos.org/dynamos/benning/>) Ward 2 residents and community-based organizations forged three surveys, one for adults 18 and older, one for seniors with large-print, and one specially designed for youth by youth-focused counselors. This would be the first time that the youth were asked in any substantive way what they thought about their new neighborhood library.

Between April and June of 2008, more than 165 surveys were collected from residents living near the Watha T. Daniel / Shaw library. Nearly half of these were from youth ages 10 to 17. These results would not have been possible without the help of community partners who allowed Shaw Library Study Group participants to present surveys at community meetings, who included surveys as part of community service intake protocols, and helped with neighbor-to-neighbor efforts both in person and online.

Community collaboration came from groups including *Library Renaissance Project, Shaw Library Friends Group, ANC2C Commissioners, Shaw Junior High School, Seaton Elementary School, Bread for the City, Kidpower, Emmaus Services for the Aging, East Central Civic Association, ANC 2F Commissioners, Mount Vernon Square Neighborhood Association (MVSNA), ANC 5B Commissioners, Logan Circle Civic Association, Asbury Dwellings Tenant Association, and the Kennedy Recreation Center*.

The survey results, as shown on the following pages, plus all original source data on compact disc, were presented in person to Mr. Archie Williams of DC Public Libraries, on June 19, 2008 at the King Memorial Library. He shared these with Chief Librarian Ginnie Cooper who in turn was to share them with the Board of Library Trustees.

Survey results can also be found online >> <http://www.districtdynamos.org/documents/surveys/>