

Interim Branches: Libraries For Flood-Ravaged Neighborhoods

The New Orleans Public Library (NOPL) suffered heavily in the flooding that followed Hurricane Katrina: eight of its thirteen libraries were damaged beyond reopening; 318,000 books, CDs, etc. were destroyed—nearly half the collection.

NOPL is determined to rebuild better than before the storm. The Library has prepared an ambitious twenty-year master plan to create a city-wide network of dramatically improved libraries. Meanwhile, using storefronts, modular buildings, and bookmobiles, NOPL is opening interim branches to restore library services to recovering areas while repairs, renovation, and new construction proceed.

Gulf Coast Library Project. The backbone of the interim branches program is the SOLINET Gulf Coast Library Project, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. This three-year project is supporting most capital and operating expenses for six interim branch libraries at these sites:

- Mid-City Center
- Martin Luther King, Jr. School (Lower Ninth Ward)
- Albert Einstein School (East New Orleans)
- Algiers Regional Library
- Rosa Keller Library (Broadmoor)
- Robert Smith Library (Lakeview).

National and Local Support. The Gates Foundation's support totals \$2.4 million. The New Orleans Public Library Foundation is striving to complement this generosity with \$500,000 in local support to fund certain utilities and other site-specific costs and to expand the book collection at each library—to "fill the shelves" with the best selection possible. Of this, \$150,000 has been raised, and through purchases and in-kind donations, approximately 25,000 additional books have been put on NOPL shelves. (Our goal is 40,000 volumes.)

Recognition for Local Donors. Donors of \$10,000 or more will be recognized in Library publications and in displays at the interim branches. Donors of \$50,000 or more may elect, in addition, prominent exterior recognition at an interim branch. NOPL will welcome suggestions for events or other activities that recognize donors and promote our services to the community.

The **New Orleans Public Library Foundation** is a 501c3 charitable organization founded in 1990 to support the work of the New Orleans Public Library. Since Hurricane Katrina the NOPL Foundation has taken a lead role in funding Library repairs, renovation, education programs, and restoration of the collection.