It's alright, we're here for you

During the Baltimore unrest, I was standing by a little girl outside the Pratt’s Pennsylvania Avenue Branch when the streets were flooded with protestors, police officers and media from around the world.

Carl’s Column

The girl looked up at me and asked, “What’s the matter?” Her voice was echoed by children throughout the neighborhood during that volatile time. The Pratt Library has been part of Baltimore’s fabric for more than 125 years. The unrest both here and in Ferguson, MO put the spotlight on the importance of libraries as a safe haven. Our role has evolved to a place offering much more than books. Since the unrest, and with the help of generous donors, we have expanded our community programs including summer meals for children and teens at six Pratt Library branches. This fall, Lawyer in the Library will provide free legal services to patrons. The Pratt Library staff’s actions were applauded at the recent American Library Association Conference in San Francisco, attended by over 20,000 professionals.

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Pennsylvania Avenue Branch during the unrest: “It’s alright, we’re here for you.”

Pennsylvania Avenue Branch Manager Melanie Townsend Diggs received the People First Award, and School and Student Services Coordinator Townsend Diggs noticed a group moving toward the library, located at the epicenter of the unrest. She consulted with Pratt library CEO Dr. Carla Hayden, then quietly locked the doors and asked staff to shepherd patrons—including the many unaccompanied children who visit the library daily after school—to the downstairs children’s section. There, away from the windows, the children played computer games and adults waited anxiously while the CVS store across the street erupted in flames.

Dr. Hayden welcomed Senator Barbara Mikulski, US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and USDA Secretary Tom Vilsak to visit the branch and discuss the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans.

Why Libraries Matter

When the Ferguson, Missouri library stayed open and offered ice water, air conditioning and rest to a weary and frightened community last fall, word spread quickly.

EWS OUTLETS and social media shared admiration—and surprise—for the library and its role as a safe community gathering space. Pratt librarians and patrons, however, were not surprised. During heat waves, snowstorms, power outages and tough economic times the library is always there. Open, welcoming and ready to serve.

Sometimes the work is easy. Few things are more gratifying than reading books and making crafts with a group of preschoolers, finding just the right books to grab the interest of a second grader who doesn’t like to read, or helping a homeless adult create an email account and apply for a job.

Other days are not so easy. On Monday April 27, unrest broke out across Baltimore in the wake of Freddie Gray’s death. Shortly before 2 p.m. that day, Pennsylvania Avenue Branch Manager Melanie Townsend Diggs noticed a group moving toward the library, located at the epicenter of the unrest. She consulted with Pratt library CEO Dr. Carla Hayden, then quietly locked the doors and asked staff to shepherd patrons—including the many unaccompanied children who visit the library daily after school—to the downstairs children’s section. There, away from the windows, the children played computer games and adults waited anxiously while the CVS store across the street erupted in flames.

By 5 p.m. it was safe to leave through a side door and everyone made it home safely. There was a palpable feeling of sadness in the air on Tuesday April 28. Pockets throughout the city were damaged by the previous day’s unrest. Fires were still smoldering, storefronts and restaurants were boarded up. City schools were closed and many businesses told their employees to stay home. But there really was no question whether the Pratt Library—all branches included—would open. Pratt CEO Dr. Carla Hayden hung the “open” sign on the Pennsylvania Avenue branch door herself, and she and branch staff spent the day greeting and serving anyone and everyone. It was business as usual for a community that needed some usual.

Managing an urban library branch is not a glamorous job. Juggling schedules, problem solving for sometimes very angry patrons, and addressing the occasional plumbing emergency fill most days. This work is all part of being a valuable community resource. Certainly April 28 was different; the Pratt and Melanie Townsend Diggs did not go unnoticed by the media. By the end of the day Melanie Townsend Diggs noticed a group moving toward the library, located at the epicenter of the unrest. She consulted with Pratt library CEO Dr. Carla Hayden, then quietly locked the doors and asked staff to shepherd patrons—including the many unaccompanied children who visit the library daily after school—to the downstairs children’s section. There, away from the windows, the children played computer games and adults waited anxiously while the CVS store across the street erupted in flames. By 5 p.m. it was safe to leave through a side door and everyone made it home safely.
had appeared on MSNBC, MTV and WMAR Baltimore, handling these interviews as graciously as she had cared for patrons the previous day. Dr. Offit was interviewed by a German television network and stories appeared in The Washington Post online, Newsweek, BuzzFeed and Mashable.

Social media exploded with expressions of support for the Pratt, many posts suggested donations to the library. During the 48 hours, more than 70 donors contributed $5,000. Since then the outpouring of love and support for the Pratt has been overwhelming. Silicon Valley entrepreneurs, investors and philanthropists Marc Andreessen and Laura Arrillaga-Andreessen reinvigorated the Pratt public computer system with a game-changing gift of more than 200 computers, printers and laptops valued at $710,000.

New businesswoman, Baltimore native, and former Johns Hopkins University Board of Trustees Chair Morris Offit and his wife Nancy donated $300,000 to the university and asked Hopkins President Ron Daniels and U.S. Representative Elijah Cummings to appropriate the gift; $100,000 was designated for Pratt literacy programs for children. PNC Bank and the University of MD quickly responded, each contributed $25,000 to the Pennsylvania Avenue branch, and 119 individuals contributed nearly $7,500.

As one supporter said on Twitter, “Thanks to the Pratt Library. They’ve been here for years, and they will be here when the cameras are gone.”

So often we are asked why libraries matter in the 21st century. Can’t we just get information from Google? Won’t we all be reading eBooks in five years anyway? Why spend all that money and build and all those books? The April 27 unrest in Baltimore was incredibly challenging for our city. But that dark day and those days that followed reminded us that libraries are so much more than books and computers. Libraries are the people who work within and the customers—adults, children and teenagers—who depend on them. Our communities need safe, welcoming spaces and information that is accessible to all. The Pratt Library has filled that role for Baltimore since 1886; this spring we were reminded that in 2015 the library is stronger than ever.

Central Library Renovation FAQ

Why is the Central Library sometimes referred to as SLRC? Why is the renovation referred to as the SLRC Renovation? Most official state libraries are located near their respective State Capitals. In Maryland, the Public Library Central Library has filled this role since the General Assembly designated it the State Library Resource Center (SLRC) in 1971. The renovation of the SLRC is a State project and, as such, is primarily state-funded.

What is the timeline of the renovation? The renovation is presently in the design contract documents phase. Central Library / SLRC will remain open to the public during construction, which is projected to start in 2015 and continue through 2018.

What is the cost of the construction? Because the SLRC renovation is a state project, Maryland covers the total cost. The total budget and funding sources for renovation—

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<tr>
<td>CITY OF BALTIMORE</td>
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How will the public service hours of Central be affected? The Central library will remain open throughout the renovation with regular hours. The public will receive advance notice of any required changes to those hours of operations.

Where will the books and other materials go during renovation? Library materials will be moved to an accessible location; the checkout process will not change. The Collections Management Division will continue to be responsible for the selection, purchasing, processing, cataloging, and preservation of all library materials. The off-site materials will be read and resourced to accommodate the needs of this critical library operation.

Will author programs still be held at the Central Library? Some programs may be held onsite. Judy Cooper, Chief of Programs and Publications, is working with nearby partner organizations to secure locations for public author programs.

Will any staff be relocated? The Central Library will remain open to the public with regular hours; therefore, public service librarians will remain onsite and accessible to library patrons. The majority of the “behind-the-scenes” Central Library staff will be relocated to help expedite the construction process. Administrative staff will move to an office space nearby on North Charles Street. The department that manages the library’s collections, inter-library loan, and shipping services will move to a separate library operations center.

How will taxpayer and private dollars be stewarded? The SLRC renovation is led by the Maryland State Department of General Services and the team includes the project architects and many members of the Pratt Library leadership team, including CEO Carla Hayden. The team meets regularly to keep the project on schedule, monitor the budget and ensure communication.

Will the renovated building be different? What will change? The state-of-the-art renovations to the Central Library will modernize the building’s infrastructure and increase opportunities for learning, research, creativity and civic engagement. It will complement the Pratt’s significant print collection with the latest technologies, welcoming a vibrant future while preserving a cherished historic landmark. Highlights include:

- Expanded training/conference facilities and more versatile spaces for meetings and events
- “Creation Stations” to fuel creative learning for adults, teens and children
- A new Teen and Young Adult wing and an expanded and restored Children’s Learning Center department
- A designated Job/Career Center with significantly expanded facilities for coaching, meetings and events
- “Technology Take-out” collections
- More public computers and up-to-date and integrated technology

The collections will be organized to meet the needs of those who use them—i.e., children, teens and adults. This strategy will make it easy for those engaging in research or entertainment. There will be one primary location for each age group when seeking resources. Some of this re-organization is already apparent with the recent moves of the Humanities and Fine Arts Collections to the Mezzanine and First Floor.

The Central Library/SLRC will have moving reference librarians with mobile devices to assist library customers more efficiently.

All of the building systems—including the elevators, lighting, plumbing, heating, air conditioning, audio visual and information technology will be upgraded.

We would like to recognize the generosity of the following donors who are making this extraordinary effort possible. We are also deeply grateful to the generous donors who have contributed to Pratt’s private-support portion of the campaign. As of July 15, the Library has raised more than $14.9 million. Join with other generous private donors by making a contribution to the renovation at www.prattlibrary.org/supportcentral

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Embracing Change in Philanthropy

At a recent conference, I presented findings from a study on charitable giving. During the presentation a member of the audience made a profound statement: “If we want to connect with younger and more diverse donors, we need to think about giving in the flow of their everyday lives.”

To get on a donor’s radar and eventually win their loyalty, organizations need to reach out in multiple ways and develop more than a transactional relationship.

Generations are more likely to make a real difference by telling their friends and family about the causes they support and are more comfortable doing this than their older counterparts. Younger donors are more likely to “follow” their preferred charities on Facebook, Twitter and other platforms (53% Millennials, 48% Gen X) and are more likely to think it is “appropriate” for charitable organizations to solicit funds through these media.

The power and immediacy of social media was evident at the Pratt during Baltimore’s recent unrest. Silicon Valley philanthropists Marc Andreessen and Laura Arrillaga-Andreessen came across the Pratt Library’s tweets that Tuesday morning and were impressed that the library remained open as a haven in a time of chaos. Marc posted his thoughts on Twitter and then made a generous contribution. Followers around the country saw the post, and made donations to the Pratt in solidarity.

Younger and diverse donors are more likely to support organizations through “retail philanthropy”—making a donation to a cause as they checkout at a store, or purchasing an item where a portion of the proceeds go back to the organization. For many, this is how they first learn and get involved with organizations. The workplace is also an important channel for exposing younger and diverse donors to new groups.

As philanthropy evolves, and donors demand that organizations meet them in their spaces and places, the Pratt Library stands out as a local leader.

Pam Leeb is a Principal at Edge Research, a marketing research firm that specializes in studies on donor acquisition and retention. The findings referenced in this article are from “The Next Generation of American Giving” (May 2013) and “Diversity in Giving” (October 2013)—conducted in partnership with Blackbaud and Search Strategies.

If you have questions about giving, please contact Cindi Monahan, Director of Institutional Advancement, at 410-396-5283, or cmmonahan@prattlibrary.org

It was natural for the Mittenthal’s son, Matt, to become a library kid; Miriam made sure Matt had the opportunity to check out books and attend story times. She often brought Matt’s friends along, “It was more fun for Matt to bring them to the library,” she says, “and I still have a clear picture of how the library looked during the 1950s. My mother took us there at least twice a week and we checked out stacks of books. By the time I was a student at Western High, the school was overcrowded so we only attended half days. I went to the Central library immediately after school many days; Central was my resource for everything. “I went to the Central library regularly,” says Herb Mittenthal. “When I was 10 or 11 I got very interested in science fiction, and the librarians helped me choose a variety of books. I read a lot, and it made a real difference in my schoolwork. Later, I spent some time doing research at the Central branch during high school, college and beyond.”

Childrenhoods Shared

Parents—and grandparents—want to share the best of their childhoods with their offsprings. Baltimore’s Mittenthal family is doing just that by supporting the Canton branch renovation.

When I was growing up in the 1940s and 1950s I went to the Pimlico library,” says Herb Mittenthal. “When I was 10 or 11 I got very interested in science fiction, and the librarians helped me choose a variety of books. I read a lot, and it made a real difference in my schoolwork. Later, I spent some time doing research at the Central branch during high school, college and beyond.”

Miriam Mittenthal has her own Pratt Library memories. “I grew up near the Pennsylvania Avenue branch,” she says, “and I still have a clear picture of how the library looked during the 1950s. My mother took us there at least twice a week and we checked out stacks of books. By the time I was a student at Western High, the school was overcrowded so we only attended half days. I went to the Central library immediately after school many days; Central was my resource for everything.”

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Miriam Mittenthal

It was natural for the Mittenthal’s son, Matt, to become a library kid; Miriam made sure Matt had the opportunity to check out books and attend story times. She often brought Matt’s friends along, “It was more fun for Matt to take friends, and I was happy to bring children to the library.” Matt Mittenthal’s memories are of the library as a lively place. “We would run around the play areas and have a great time, and as we got older, we found everything we needed for our summer reading lists.”

Now that Matt and his wife Carrie have children of their own, Herb and Miriam want to make sure that tradition continues. “When Matt and Carrie moved to O’Donnell Street we noticed the library was being rebuilt,” Herb says. “We were so delighted to see that and made a gift to help with purchasing computers, desks and other furnishings.”

When the Canton library reopened in late October, Matt (age three) and Teddy (age two months) will have all the resources of the Pratt library close to home. “We are looking forward to sharing this great resource with our kids,” Matt says.

Miriam pointed out that living near a renovated library helps people like Matt and Carrie stay in the city. “City dwellers need a place to go where they can meet, be comfortable and have a great experience,” Matt concurs. “One reason we put the offer on our house was the fact that a library is just across the street. Once we moved in we realized we had made a great decision. The library makes a great block even better.”

Have you included the Pratt Library in your will and estate plan?

For information, CALL THE OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT AT (410) 396-5283.
Coming to the Pratt*

Sep 10 Treasures from the Vault** A lock of Edgar Allan Poe’s hair...original Kirk silver...These are just some of the unique finds housed in the library’s walk-in vault. Pratt Society members gain exclusive entry at this special event hosted by Pratt CEO Carla Hayden and Wesley Wilson, Director of the Maryland State Library Resource Center. Central Library, 6-8 PM

Sep 15 New York Times bestselling author Amy Stewart (The Drunken Botanist) discusses her latest novel, Girl Waits With Gun. Central Library, 7 PM

Sep 24 Freeman Hrabowski discusses his new book, Holding Fast to Dreams: Empowering Youth, from the Civil Rights Crusade to STEM Achievement. Central Library, 7 PM


2016 SAVE THESE DATES!
Jan 30 Black & White Party
Apr 9 Mr. Pratt’s Party
--- Pratt Society member event—For more info on the Pratt Society and related member events, email prattsociety@prattlibrary.org

* See the latest issue of Compass or check out the Pratt’s website for a complete list of upcoming speakers and programs

Fundraising at The Pratt Library

The Enoch Pratt Free Library’s Department of Institutional Advancement works with the Library’s leadership team and Board of Directors and Trustees to secure financial resources from private sources that will enable the Library to fund and expand services to meet the increasing needs of the community.

IN FY2015 the library raised more than $6 million from individuals, corporations, and foundations to support programming and capital initiatives and ensure all Pratt services remain free.

Please feel free to contact our staff at any time to discuss your giving concerns or needs.
Donor Roll Call

We gratefully acknowledge our donors for their generous Fiscal Year 2015 Annual Fund Support.

$100,000+

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Mr. & Mrs. Philip G. Markle, Jr.

$50,000 - $99,999

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C. Limited

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$10,000 - $24,999

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