

Council Meeting of  
September 26, 2006

Honorable Mayor and Members  
of the City Council  
City Hall  
Torrance, California

Members of the Council:

**SUBJECT: Community Services - Accept and appropriate a grant from the Torrance Public Library Foundation in the amount of \$40,000 to fund a Southeast Branch Library Homework Center**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Community Services Director recommends that the City Council accept and appropriate a grant of \$40,000 from the Torrance Public Library Foundation to fund a Homework Center at the Southeast Branch Library. (FEAP 621)

### **Funding**

Funding is available from the \$40,000 grant from the Torrance Public Library Foundation.

### **BACKGROUND**

In 2004, the Torrance Public Library Foundation adopted a formal Homework Center at the Southeast Branch Library as its fundraising goal. Based on costs incurred for the Homework Center at the Katy Geissert Civic Center Library, the projected budget was estimated at \$55,000 to include technology workstations, appropriate software to support school activities, furniture to house the equipment, textbooks and other curriculum support materials, and appropriate school supplies to support students. Through donations from the community, the sale of canvas book bags, and a fundraising event in April of 2006, the Torrance Public Library Foundation raised money for this significant project, and has donated \$40,000 to establish the Southeast Library Homework Center.

### **ANALYSIS**

Most Torrance libraries serve significant numbers of students after school. Students arrive to find a place to study with or without peers, to use library collections and electronic resources, and to take advantage of the Library's volunteer Homework Helpers, high school students who assist with homework

assignments. The Torrance Public Library supports these activities through the purchase of curriculum support materials in the ongoing materials budget, soliciting and supporting volunteer Homework Helpers, and offering space to students in an informal fashion.

Recently, library staff applied for and received Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant funding to provide Live Homework Help, an on-line program that, via the Internet and through the Library's website, provides highly-qualified tutors to work one-on-one with students to help them with their assignments and research.

When the Torrance Public Library Foundation Board met with the City Librarian and other staff to seek a project to support through fundraising, staff had already fully embraced the Homework Center model. Successfully established in Los Angeles and Long Beach, library homework centers consisted of student support in a designated space including technology, textbooks, school supplies, and assistance. Research conducted by the Department of Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles indicated that teens using homework center services improved their study habits, achieved greater educational success, and contributed to their community. Students also felt safe studying in a library setting after school, and developed personal and social skills, often becoming volunteer tutors or homework helpers themselves. Research also showed that students who participated in structured homework-assistance programs read more and their math grades improved.

The Friends of the Torrance Library donated \$56,000 to construct Torrance Public Library's first formalized Homework Center as part of the 2004 remodel of the upper level of the Katy Geissert Civic Center Library. The project gathered informal services and materials into a formally designated service, with separate materials, designated technology, and a physical area in the library set aside for student needs. This model has been successful in enabling Torrance students to complete homework assignments in a safe, inviting, and supportive atmosphere. A formal Homework Center is also planned for the proposed North Torrance Library and Community Services Center, and the Youth Services Department makes curriculum support and provision of after-school enrichment activities a service priority in all Torrance libraries.

With successful fundraising by the Torrance Public Library Foundation and assistance from General Services Department staff determining the necessary electrical and wiring capacity of the Southeast Library building, the Torrance Public Library is prepared to begin implementation of the branch's Homework Center project. The Southeast Library Homework Center will consist of four technology workstations at which students can use educational and office software, Internet, and electronic resources. In addition, the branch will obtain Torrance Unified School District (TUSD) textbooks for grades 4 – 8, basic school supplies that will

allow students to complete projects on-site, and will enhance the library's collection of curriculum support materials through additional workbooks, skill-building resources such as flash cards, and test-taking materials.

Torrance Public Library staff is enthusiastic about providing enhanced services for students at the Southeast Branch Library. A revised budget based on current costs and project design has been set at \$40,000. Over two years of fundraising, the Torrance Public Library Foundation has achieved its monetary goal, and its use to create a new Homework Center will greatly benefit the students, parents, and teachers who serve Torrance youth.

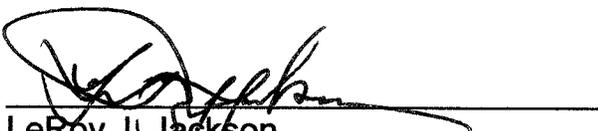
Respectfully submitted,

GENE BARNETT  
COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR

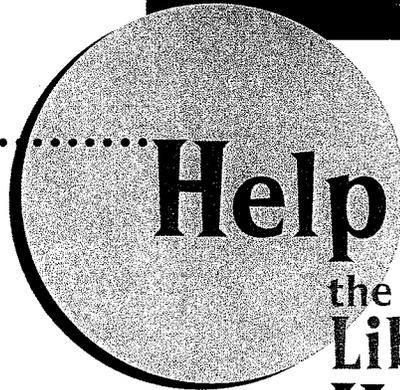
By   
Paula J. Weiner  
City Librarian

CONCUR:

  
Gene Barnett, Director  
Community Services Department

  
LeRoy J. Jackson  
City Manager

Attachments: A. Foundation Homework Center Flyer  
B. Homework Center Project Budget



# Help Build the Southeast Library Homework Center



## What is it?

- Monitored area within the library
- Volunteer homework helpers
- Curriculum support for 2<sup>nd</sup> gr. & up
  - Including local school texts
- Also featuring...
  - Computer terminals
  - Scanner
  - Printer
  - Educational & office software
  - School Supplies
  - Ergonomic furniture

## Why?

- Students need an after school monitored location where they can research, create and output their homework.

Did you know....?

- Only 50% of households have computers.
- From the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade on, most parents find homework challenging.
- ESL students benefit from interactive, educational software.

**Join our \$55,000 campaign!**

## How you can help:

- **\$100 donation:** provides school supplies or a school text for a year.
  - **\$1000 or more donation:** provides for equipment and software.
- Also available: Naming opportunities and donation recognition.

The Torrance Public Library Foundation is a 501(C)(3) organization. Fed. Tax ID #95-4503976

Please make your donation payable to:

Torrance Public Library Foundation, 3301 Torrance Blvd, Torrance CA 90503.



**Invest in our future at the Torrance Public Library!**

### **Budget for Southeast Library Homework Center**

The following is the working budget to establish a Homework Center for the Southeast Branch Library. This budget is designed to establish and maintain four public computers with related software, furniture and seating, books and textbooks in four subjects for grades 4-8 for the Torrance Unified School District, and related school supplies. The total is **\$40,000** with the following components:

- **Computer Hardware and Peripherals** **\$13,692**

This represents the current costs to purchase and configure four public computers, as well as cover one replacement cycle (four years) for each. This includes cabling to the area where the computers will be located, the computer, the monitor, the peripherals (mouse, keyboard, etc.), Internet access, antivirus software and the operating system that is standard for City of Torrance computers. A color printer will be shared among the four workstations, and a scanner has been budgeted as well, to be added after the facility undergoes an electrical upgrade in FY 2007-08.

Purchase, install and configure four workstations, one color printer, one scanner -	\$7,706
Replacement -	5,986

- **Computer Software** **\$14,416**

This includes the purchase of the Microsoft Office programs for each computer (word processing, spreadsheet, presentation software), and a bundle of educational "skill and drill" software specifically designed for students to enhance study skills and enable assignments to be completed more effectively. The computers will also have the Deep Freeze and Envisionware software installed; the cost of these is covered under our current license. These items have no replacement costs unless prices go up.

Microsoft Office -	\$ 2,416
Educational Software -	12,000

- **Furniture** **\$3,000**

The Homework Center will require new furniture appropriate to use of technology workstations by youth. This is a rough estimate based on standard industry costs for four workstations and a printer stand, with four chairs.

- **Textbooks and Library Materials** **\$5,475**

This budget establishes a textbook collection covering Torrance Unified School District grades 4-8, with one subject replaced every year. An additional amount will be used to enhance existing library collections with homework helpers, workbooks, flash cards, and other study skill items.

School supplies such as paper for the printer, lined paper, scissors, calculators, rulers, and the like will also be available to students in the library, with money to replace them each year.

Textbooks -	\$4,000
Library books -	500
School supplies -	780

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The total budget for the items listed is \$36,583, and the Foundation determined to round up to \$40,000 to cover any unexpected costs, such as an increase in furniture pricing, unexpected electrical or wiring work, or a change in the City of Torrance's computer contracts.

This figure is different and less than the projected \$55,000 target at the start of the Foundation campaign for several reasons. The \$55,000 was a rough estimate based on the costs of the new Friends of the Library Homework Center at the Katy Geissert Civic Center Library. The Friends Homework Center has eight computers for students, and the number was reduced to four for Southeast due to space considerations. In addition, the furniture cost for the workstations at the Katy Geissert Civic Center Library was absorbed into the upper level remodel project, while furniture to house the workstations at Southeast is included in the Foundation budget.

Staff has had the opportunity to calculate usage of the software selections at the Katy Geissert Civic Center Library Homework Center and different software may be selected for the Southeast Library in response to feedback from students and parents.

All costs are projected out for one PC replacement cycle, and will sustain the Southeast Branch Library Homework Center through eight years of operation, barring unforeseen circumstances.