

ALA American Library Association

January 17, 2012

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20500

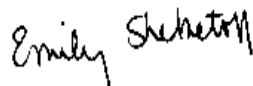
Dear Mr. President,

I want to take this opportunity and thank you and the First Lady for your service work in the school library at the Browne Education Center in Washington, D.C. on Martin Luther King Day, January 16, 2012. Your service work will go a long way to ensure that many young students of the District of Columbia receive an adequate education. It is quite fitting that your work at the Browne school library came on Martin Luther King Day, because a fully funded, up to date, school library is a place where children, regardless of background, can have equal access to all types of educational materials, furthering Dr. King's legacy of justice and equality for all.

As you know, school libraries are no longer just a place for books and journals, but have also become a classroom equipped with computers and technology. Some of the major skills that school librarians teach in today's school library are techniques and methods for locating and answering electronic searches through critical thinking, these are skills that students need in order to become college and career ready in the 21st century. Even though school libraries help many children learn important everyday skills, they continue to be one of the most underfunded classrooms in the United States. In many cases, absent a school library, students will not receive these instructions in other traditional classrooms.

Thank you again for your service work at the Browne Education Center, and I invite you to tour an up-to-date, fully staffed, school library, so you can see for yourself what an important role school libraries play in a child's education.

Sincerely,



Emily Sheketoff, Executive Director
Washington Office, American Library Association