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Elmont Memorial Public Library  
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**The Elmont Library Board of Trustees Makes a Difficult Decision  
During Difficult Economic Times and Changing Library Trends.**

With a heavy heart the Board of Trustees of the Elmont Public Library announces the proposed closing of the Alden Manor and Steward Manor Branches. The main Library, at 700 Hempstead Turnpike, will remain to continue and serve the community more efficiently. Despite the fact that use and circulation at the Branches has significantly declined, one thing that is consistently increasing is the cost to maintain and operate the Branches. The two Branches have serviced Library patrons in our District for the past 68 years. The decision to close the Alden Manor and Steward Manor Branches by the Board has most certainly not been entered into lightly. We would be remiss if we did not recognize the efforts of current and past Branch employees. Their dedicated service over nearly seven decades will be greatly missed by our Alden and Stewart Manor patrons, however, we are working on a plan to ease the transition of the staff members from both Branches to the Main Library. We welcome, of course, the Alden Manor and Stewart Manor patrons to the enjoyment and benefits of the main branch.

The Board of Trustees of the Elmont Public Library has been working vigorously over the past several months to reconcile a 7.2% proposed budget increase for the 2012/2013 year, and the escalating expenses to the Library and its taxpayers for the years ahead. These increases, in large part, are due, but not limited, to the spiraling costs passed on to the Library by the Nassau Library System, which provides services to libraries such as coordinated database subscriptions at a discounted rate, inter-Library loans, delivery services, continuing education, coordination of Summer Reading Programs for Children and Teens, etc. The Nassau Library System has increased the Elmont Public Library's cost for these services at an approximate 1,375 percent increase over an 11-year period. That is, in the year 2011, the Elmont Public Library's cost for these services was \$2,073.00, in 2012 it is \$18,845.00, and in 2014 it is projected that the cost will be \$30,615.00. In addition, the Board is faced with increasing mandated retirement and health insurance costs, which have significantly increased 5,050 percent and 145 percent, respectively, over a 10-year period. There are a number of other factors that contribute to the escalating costs the Library must absorb, but the aforementioned are the most incongruous.

For the past three years, the Board of Trustees has operated the Library at a zero percent increase to its taxpayers. This may be misleading to taxpayers who believe that a zero percent increase insinuates that the Library has incurred no additional expenses. This could not be further from the truth. In 2002/03, the Library's expenditures were \$1,844,141.00. In the 2012/13 budget, the Library's expenditures are \$3,240,092.00. In 10 years, the Library's expenditures increased \$1,395,951.00 or 75%. In reality, the Board has consistently taken into account the economic climate at hand and the financial wherewithal of its taxpayers in determining whether to present an increase. Over the years, this has meant that the Board, its consultants, its director and staff had to be creative in providing services without sacrificing quality in order to present to the taxpayers an affordable budget. Unfortunately, the state of the economy has not strengthened and taxpayers continue to face hardships. It is with this in mind that the Board continues to strive for continued quality in services without burdening the taxpayer. However, this year we have been presented with a slew of challenges that threaten this very vision.

After diligently reviewing the budget, taking into account the needs, the wants, and the financial considerations of every community member, the Board has resolved to close the beloved branches. After much thought, consideration and a long discussion, it is the only financially prudent decision when looking ahead to the future. In making this decision, the Board also looked to the following factors: current library trends, circulation, and library usage. Library trends are changing quickly as technology advances. Hence, the traditional four-walled library, stacked with books, is changing. Adult book circulation, DVDs, and CDs are steadfastly declining. In the private sector, book and music stores are closing every day. Downloadable books and music are on the rise. Library patrons today are downloading approximately 100 books per week without stepping foot in the library! These four walls are fast becoming a community resource center where patrons come not only to access books and materials, but to enjoy programs and entertainment, and utilize computers and the vast array of databases that the Elmont Public Library is able to offer.

The decline in the traditional use of a library is evident by statistics which proffer that the Branches had their highest usage in the 1970's and 80's. Their combined circulation totaled approximately 100,000 items! In 2011, the circulation totaled 23,412, which represents a 77% drop in materials circulated. Today, the Branches' combined circulation equals only 7% of the total circulation. Not only is circulation on the decline at the Branches, but so is patron usage. In 2011, the Library had 32,603 patrons with Library cards, 450 of which used the Stewart Manor Branch and 688 of which used the Alden Manor Branch. This represents 3% of Library card holders.

It is with a heavy heart, plus all of the aforementioned factors, that the Board has come to this decision.