

Statement to the Legislative Assembly

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Minister of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs

Update on the Cayman Islands Public Library Service

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MINISTRY OF
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT
& GENDER AFFAIRS
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

I am happy to report to this honourable House that during the 2013 calendar year the use of the Public Library Service has increased as compared to the previous year. During the calendar year from January 1, 2013 through December 2013, total circulation for all library branches was 91,034. The average weekly circulation of 1,821 (based on 50 operational weeks per year) represents an increase of 750 that was reported for the period of January 1, 2012 – December 31, 2012.

Over the 2013/2014 financial year the Public Library Service has been focused on creating opportunities that position the library to play an important role in human capital development and lifelong learning. The introduction of the new Computer Assisted Literacy Programme which was initiated in partnership with Rotary Sunrise now has 5 full-time students who attend 3 days per week. To support retooling and up skilling of persons who want to partake in the 21st century labour market, Techbyte computer courses was launched in 2013, delivered by Library Services, and are designed to help adult learners feel more comfortable and confident with computer technology and covers the essential functions that are most commonly used. The course topics include hardware identification, mouse and keyboard familiarization along with an intro to Windows, Internet usage and Microsoft Office Software. To date, 26 persons throughout the community have successfully passed this course. The Public Library Service will continue to offer the courses throughout the summer at each of the library branch locations.

Over the 2014/15 financial year, the Public Library Service is committed to continuing to promote local authors and their published works, by acquiring all full collections of all local titles and making them available at each of our branches. It will also continue to offer intermittent language courses such as Spanish and Mandarin Chinese lessons, which were conducted in February 2014, and to celebrate cultures by promoting workshops, lessons, cultural events, displays and histories of various nationalities represented in the Cayman Islands.

The Public Library Services looks forward to developing strong library-related organizations such as Friends of the Library and library community committees and volunteer organizations that focus on collection building and programme delivery. Work is currently taking place to offer a collection of over 33,000 eBooks and 1,700 magazines online as an alternative source of reading for entertainment, information, educational, employment and academic information. In the 2014/2015 financial year, library members will be able to easily access eBooks and magazines from virtually any device that is connected to the internet.

As we move into the next financial year, the Public Library Services will be expanding the early years Read/Play/Learn programme to include every library branch. They will continue to promote reading by initiating a variety of literacy and reading awareness activities such as weekly and monthly story times; Battle of the books; Book/Poster Competitions, International Literacy Events and more. Through the Public Library Services, the community will benefit from continued efforts to support the needs of the our young citizens by offering after-school

homework help at every library branch and strengthening the partnerships with schools by providing each school with the Student Information Research (SIRS) academic data base that supports and supplement learning.

In the 2014/2015 financial year, the Ministry of EE&GA will continue to support the further development of the Public Library Service as a critical community resource for personal enrichment, enjoyment and educational needs and, as an important component of the national workforce development and training agenda.
