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1/xx/2008

Study and photos available upon request

Contact: Anne Wintroub

(415) 626-7512 ext. 115,

anne.wintroub@friendssfpl.org

One Dollar In, More than Three Out! New Study Asserts the Economic Value of the San Francisco Public Library System

Conducted by Berk and Associates, study shows that for every dollar spent supporting the San Francisco Public Library, city residents see a return of more than three times that amount

San Francisco, CA—A study released today by the Friends of the San Francisco Public Library describes the diverse contributions and quantifies the substantial value that the San Francisco Public Library provides to San Francisco. Through an examination of an array of library benefits, the study reveals that the SFPL generates an impressive return of \$3.34 for every dollar spent on its operations and services.

“The San Francisco Public Library’s contributions to the health and vitality of our city are essential and vast,” Mayor Gavin Newsom is quoted in the study. “The library not only perfectly represents the principles of our community; it answers the needs of each and every San Francisco citizen. It is public in the very best sense of the word: of and for all people.”

Conducted by Berk and Associates, a Seattle-based research and economic analysis firm, the study entitled, “Providing for Knowledge, Growth and Prosperity: A Benefit Study of the San Francisco Public Library,” illustrates how the SFPL has evolved to be a characteristically San Franciscan institution uniquely suited to serve the City and its inhabitants, particularly those most in need.

“The Economic Impact Study confirms that the SFPL is a critical force for San Francisco, uniquely situated to meet the City’s needs,” said Donna Bero, executive director of Friends. “Our libraries provide benefits that far exceed our investment in them. This study proves that the SFPL, high in demand and use, is a force that improves communities as it does the lives of all its users.”

“Libraries provide superb value to our City, and this benefit study gives tangible and concrete examples of how San Francisco libraries are helping build vibrant neighborhoods that contribute to our quality of life,” added Luis Herrera, City Librarian. “We are very appreciative of the Friends for undertaking this initiative that has local as well as national implications for raising awareness of the importance of our libraries.”

As described in the study, the SFPL most directly benefits the City through education and early literacy, economic and workforce development, strengthening communities and enhancing the

image and identity of San Francisco and its neighborhoods, and personal learning and recreation.

The study explores the remarkable ways that the SFPL has adapted to the changing demands of its users by broadening its roles, partnering with other organizations, and providing an increasing varied and sophisticated array of materials. Rather than serving as mere repositories of printed material, the SFPL plays many roles:

- Lender of books, magazines newspapers, DVDs and video cassettes, CDs and tapes, books on tape and CD, e-books, downloadable audio books, maps, computer files and electronic databases
- Provider of public access computers and wireless computer networks
- Facilitator of connections to needed social services
- Supporter of small and larger businesses, as well as government offices
- Recorder and archiver of history
- Curator of rare and unique special collections
- Host for dynamic cultural and artistic exhibits
- Catalyst for quality of life, neighborhood identity, and economic revitalization

The return on investment figure of as much as \$3.34 for every dollar spent supporting the SFPL was arrived at by examining a small portion of the many benefits that SFPL provides to the San Francisco community. These quantifiable benefits are related to the library's direct services, and include the circulation of library collections and the use of a wide range of library services, including computers, trainings, programming, and other specialized services. The value of most of these services was estimated by determining the market cost of a comparable service or other means of acquiring the same benefit. This market value was then multiplied by the number of uses by SFPL patrons in the 2005-06 fiscal year. The total value of these benefits for the 2005-06 fiscal year ranges from **\$87 million to \$207 million**.

The actual value of benefits provided by SFPL is a number is substantially larger than this conservative value as many of the benefits provided by the library cannot reasonably be quantified, such as improving quality of life and contributing to a civil society and an active and informed citizenry.

Friends of the San Francisco Public Library is a member-supported, non-profit organization that fundraises, advocates, and provides financial support for the San Francisco Public Library.

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