

JAVIER, THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTRODUCTION AND FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP AT THE MIAMI FOUNDATION.

FROM YOUR YEARS OF SERVICE AT COUNTY HALL THROUGH YOUR WORK FOR THE MIAMI FOUNDATION, YOU HAVE ALWAYS PUT SERVICE FIRST, AND OUR COMMUNITY IS GRATEFUL FOR YOUR EFFORTS.

LET ME ALSO THANK ALBERTO IBARGUEN OF THE KNIGHT FOUNDATION, WHOSE WORK TO IMPROVE KNIGHT COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT OUR NATION IS REFLECTIVE OF HIS COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING PEOPLE'S LIVES AND HONORING THE LEGACY OF THE KNIGHT FAMILY AND JOURNALISTIC TRADITION.

THANK YOU BOTH!

GOOD AFTERNOON EVERYONE AND IT'S A PLEASURE FOR ME TO BE HERE WITH ALL OF YOU.

TODAY WE ARE EXPLORING A FUNDAMENTAL AND VERY IMPORTANT QUESTION...

AND IT'S THE QUESTION ASKED BY THE KNIGHT LIBRARY CHALLENGE:

HOW CAN WE LEVERAGE LIBRARIES TO BUILD MORE KNOWLEDGEABLE COMMUNITIES?

BEFORE WE GET TO THAT ANSWER, WE NEED TO FIRST UNDERSTAND THE VALUE OF HAVING A KNOWLEDGEABLE COMMUNITY.

IN A WORLD WHERE INFORMATION TRAVELS AROUND THE GLOBE IN SECONDS, AND WHERE OUR STUDENTS AND OUR ECONOMY COMPETE WITH PEOPLE AND PLACES FROM AROUND THE WORLD...

OUR ABILITY TO INCREASE ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE WILL DETERMINE OUR FUTURE COMPETITIVENESS.

AND LET'S ALSO THINK ABOUT THE WAY KNOWLEDGE IS TRANSMITTED AND USED.

HOW ARE WE NOW USING AND SHARING INFORMATION?

IN OUR SCHOOLS, WE SEE IT WITH OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN, BOOKS ARE GIVING WAY TO DIGITAL TABLETS.

CHALKBOARDS ARE BEING REPLACED WITH DIGITAL SMART BOARDS.

WE STILL HAVE TERM PAPERS, BUT NOW STUDENTS CAN SUBMIT THEM AS POWER POINTS OR USE OTHER DIGITAL MEDIA.

IN THIS WORLD, WHY SHOULD LIBRARIES STAY THE SAME?

WE ASKED THIS QUESTION IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY GOVERNMENT.

THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT LIBRARIES FORM AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR COMMUNITY. THEY SERVE AS AN IMPORTANT VEHICLE FOR BOTH LEARNING AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT.

IN 2013 ALONE, OVER SEVEN MILLION IN-PERSON AND FIVE MILLION ON-LINE VISITS WERE MADE TO OUR 49 LIBRARIES.

BUT TIMES CHANGE, AND WE WANT TO MAKE SURE OUR LIBRARIES ARE ABLE TO SERVE NOT ONLY OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITY OF TODAY, BUT KEEP PACE WITH THE GROWING INFORMATION CHALLENGES OF TOMORROW.

AND QUITE FRANKLY, WE ALSO NEED TO DO THIS IN AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE GOVERNMENT BUDGETS CONTINUE TO BE STRAINED.

WE WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT LIBRARIES ARE ALSO ON A PATH WHERE THEY ARE FISCALLY SUSTAINABLE.

THIS PAST OCTOBER, MAYOR GIMENEZ CONVENED A TASK FORCE CHARGED WITH SETTING THE COURSE FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR COUNTY'S LIBRARY SYSTEM.

WE BROUGHT TOGETHER A CROSS SECTION OF OUR COMMUNITY...

MUCH IN THE SAME WAY THAT THE KNIGHT CHALLENGE SEEKS "A BROAD RANGE OF IDEAS, NOT JUST FROM THE LIBRARY COMMUNITY BUT ALSO FROM SCHOOLS, BUSINESSES, JOURNALISTS, DESIGNERS, ARTISTS AND OTHERS WHO BELIEVE IN THE TRANSFORMATIONAL POWER OF LIBRARIES..."

WE ASKED OURSELVES, HOW CAN LIBRARIES EVOLVE TO CONTINUE MEETING THE NEEDS OF OUR CHANGING COUNTY?

OUR TASK FORCE MEMBERS FOCUSED ON SERVICE NEEDS AND MODELS, FUNDING, AND HOW TO GENERATE GREATER AWARENESS.

WE TALKED ABOUT HOW TODAY'S LIBRARIES MUST MEET INCREASED NEEDS FOR ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY, ESPECIALLY IN UNDERSERVED AREAS WHERE THE LIBRARY MAY BE THE ONLY PLACE SOMEONE CAN ACCESS A COMPUTER.

AFTER MUCH DELIBERATION AND MUCH INPUT FROM GROUPS FROM THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY, THE TASK FORCE'S RECOMMENDATIONS WERE DELIVERED TO THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND WE ARE NOW WORKING ON USING THIS VALUABLE RESOURCE AS A FUTURE GUIDE FOR OUR LIBRARIES.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, WHILE LIBRARIES CONTINUE AS A CENTER OF FAMILY AND CIVIC LIFE, WE ALSO KNOW THAT THE RESIDENTS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY EXPECT AND DESERVE A WORLD-CLASS LIBRARY SYSTEM THAT SERVES THEIR DIVERSE NEEDS.

IN HIS MOST RECENT STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS, MAYOR GIMENEZ CALLED FOR LIBRARIES TO BECOME "INNOVATION CENTERS FOR OUR CHILDREN TO GATHER AND LEARN."

FOR THIS TO HAPPEN, WE NEED TO STOP SEEING LIBRARIES IN ISOLATION.

WE NEED TO START THINKING HOLISTICALLY, SEEING LIBRARIES AS HUBS, AN INTEGRAL PART OF NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS THAT BRING TOGETHER A WIDE VARIETY OF SERVICES, RANGING FROM INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES TO RECREATIONAL AND LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMS.

OUR AIM IS TO CREATE WORLD CLASS SHARED CIVIC AND PUBLIC SPACES FOR EVERYONE TO ENJOY, TO CREATE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS WHERE THE ARTS, LIBRARIES, AND PARKS CAN ALL COME TOGETHER TO PROVIDE GATHERING PLACES THAT ENGAGE OUR COMMUNITY.

THIS IS WHY YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS SO IMPORTANT.

WE ARE ALL HERE TO “RE-IMAGINE” THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARIES IN THE DIGITAL AGE. AND IT’S AN UNDERTAKING WE MUST ALL WORK ON TOGETHER.

IN THE MAYOR’S OFFICE, YOU HAVE AN OPEN AND WILLING PARTNER TO INNOVATION WHO WILL GLADLY LISTEN TO ANY CREATIVE IDEA AND SOLUTION THAT WILL HELP IMPROVE THE LIVES OF OUR RESIDENTS.

I THANK YOU FOR YOUR ENGAGEMENT...

AND I VERY MUCH LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR IDEAS ON HOW WE CAN CREATE THE LIBRARIES AND KNOWLEDGEABLE COMMUNITIES OF TOMORROW.

THANK YOU!

