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Miami-Dade Public Libraries: Hundreds Rally To Save Local Branches (PHOTOS)

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Hundreds braved a rainy weekend to rally to save Miami-Dade libraries, clearly disproving Miami-Dade Mayor [Carlos Gimenez's claim that the age of the library is probably ending](#).

Friday through Sunday protestors from Country Walk to Miami Lakes gathered outside of their libraries slated for closure, flashing signs that read: "Only closed minds close libraries" and "Libraries are fundamental. Mayors are replaceable."

Teens held posters reading "If libraries close, where will we go?" while others painted large messages on their cars in bold red: "I want my tax dollars to go to libraries."

(Story continues after slideshow.)

* Rally To Save Miami Libraries

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Rally To Save Miami Libraries

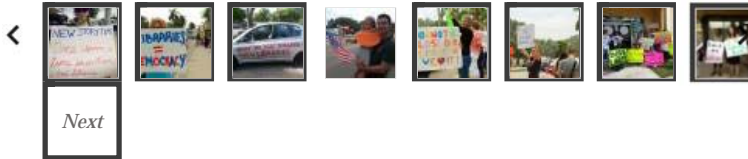
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In the mayor's earlier 2013 - 2014 budget cut plan, nearly half of the county's public libraries would have closed. But administrators have since revised the plan, narrowing to 14 branch closures, [down from the original 22](#).

The latest branches to be spared are North Shore and Virrick Park branches, in Miami Beach and Coconut Grove. Read [this Miami Herald report](#) to see if your branch is on the chopping block.

But saving those eight branches means drastically cutting services at any branch that will remain open.

["The levels of service are going to be so low, that they will be homework centers, where kids can do their homework and have internet access,"](#) John Quick, president of the board of the Friends of the Miami Dade Public Library, told the South Florida Business Journal. "It's going to be a shell of what it currently is."

Miami-Dade's library system currently serves over two million residents, granting them access to a collection of nearly four million items as well as access to public computer workstations with Internet access for public use, according to the county. In addition to a Main Library, and 49 regional libraries and neighborhood branches, the current library system also runs two bookmobiles.

Starting this week, Gimenez will hold [six town hall meetings across the county](#) to have an open forum about next year's budget cuts, including branch closures. Ironically, many of the town halls will be held at Miami-Dade libraries.

County commissioners will finalize the 2013 - 2014 county budget on September 16, and the libraries closures will take effect October 1.

Meanwhile over [4,000 people have signed an online petition](#) asking county officials to keep Miami's libraries open:

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