



LIBRARY NEWS

Sharing stories of Georgia libraries transforming lives and communities

Volume 16, issue 2, November 2018

“I challenge myself every day.”

Accessible library resources give tools for everyone to reach goals

Libraries empower children to become lifelong learners

Fall prevention classes build confidence and skills for East Cobb patrons



GEORGIA PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE

Check out our new look!

At Georgia Public Library Service, we believe that libraries transform lives every day. We are excited to share these stories and resources with you on our new website, georgialibraries.org, and through Library News.

When we decided to redesign our website, we had a vision to create a hub for public library staff to easily access the resources they need to strengthen their local library.

We also wanted a place for community members to discover that at their local library, children can create and imagine, older adults and those with disabilities can be introduced to accessible technology to maintain independence, job seekers can develop new skills and students can prepare for life beyond high school.

The website and Library News incorporate new

branding for Georgia Public Library Service, including a logo that represents the role of public libraries as welcoming, innovative and fun places to achieve your goals.

“Our public libraries are the heart of their communities; they empower their patrons, support job seekers and provide educational opportunities for students of all ages,” said State Librarian Julie Walker. “We are thrilled to share our vision and resources more effectively to libraries and the communities they serve.”

We are excited to take this step with you; thank you for supporting Georgia’s public libraries. ■



East Cobb Library builds confidence in its senior patrons to reduce their risk of falls

Public libraries can effectively keep pace with the needs of older adults by providing meaningful programs and services.

Benay Gunby, 74, regularly walks her dogs in wooded areas. But it took a fall directly in front of her house to make her aware of the risk of injury. She recently attended a fall prevention class at the East Cobb Library.

“I wanted to build confidence in preventing damaging falls,” said Gunby. “At the class, I learned points of balance and to expect the unexpected.”

The class Gunby attended was led by Dr. David Taylor, director of clinical education at Mercer University. He shared that falls are both common - one in four seniors will fall each year - and preventable. He described basic steps for participants to reduce their risks such as eliminating clutter on floors, installing a shower grab

bar and understanding potential side effects from medication.

“Our falls prevention programming shows how libraries are effective in intervening to address significant community issues,” said Helen Poyer, director of Cobb County Public Library System. “These classes are about increasing knowledge and confidence and improving quality of life. The library is a place for lifelong learning; we can help you learn what you need, when you need it.”

The group then practiced exercises to give them strength and balance, such as calf raises while holding on to a chair, sitting and standing and lifting a leg to their side.

“Seniors who limit activities to avoid falls are more likely to suffer a serious injury and become socially isolated due to fear of falling,” said East Cobb Branch Manager Ansie Krige. “Fall prevention classes build



"This is my first time in a fall prevention class. I fell recently, and I want to build confidence in getting out again and preventing future falls. I will take note of the fall prevention tips and schedule time for exercises," Sandra Robinson, 71.

Deborah Hakes

Health, UGA Cobb Extension, WellStar Health System, Kaiser Permanente Educational Theatre, Shepherd Center and Emory University Center for Health in Aging.

To learn more about the Falls Prevention Awareness Initiative, please visit www.cobbcat.org/falls-prevention. ■

confidence. I love that these participants can meet all their exercise and fall prevention needs and then get a great book to read."

East Cobb Library launched their Falls Prevention Awareness Initiative in 2015 to assist seniors in reducing their risk of serious falls in a county where about 10,000 residents visit the emergency room annually due to such injuries. Not only are falls a threat to independent living, they also are costly. According to the CDC, national direct medical costs due to falls are \$50 billion annually.

The program is very popular with local seniors, in part because the East Cobb Library is located in a shopping center, making it a convenient place to visit when they buy groceries and other goods nearby.

Cobb libraries have grown the initiative, which is centered around Falls Prevention Awareness Day observed nationally on the first day of the fall season, to include health screenings, safety checks and a fall prevention awareness open house. Cobb County Libraries' year-round senior class offerings also include tai chi, yoga, chair yoga and hula hoop.

Their evidence-based programming includes partnerships with Cobb Senior Services, Georgia Department of Public

3 million adults who are 65+ are treated in the ER each year for serious falls. - CDC



Deborah Hakes

Athens-Clarke County Library to become first trauma-informed library in Georgia

Library aims to create supportive environment for all and empower girls through peer mentoring.

Those who have experienced traumatic events, such as bullying at school, severe weather events, divorce or homelessness, do not always react or behave in the way that we may expect.

The Athens-Clarke County Library is partnering with the University of Georgia School of Social Work to help staff practice empathy for everyone who comes into the library, as well as gain an understanding of resources to share with individuals in need. The project is made possible through a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

“Every day people who are experiencing trauma come into our libraries,” said Valerie Bell, Athens Regional Library System executive director.

“Many are young people trying to establish their future in our communities; empowering library staff to recognize these efforts and to be able to connect patrons with the resources they need is one way for the public library to become more proactive in service to its communities.”

In a trauma-informed library, staff are prepared to recognize and respond to those who have

been impacted by trauma.

On a day-to-day basis, this means recognizing signs of trauma in those who come into the library and responding effectively to help them and prevent further harm.

Graduate students will be embedded in the library to share information about social services and advocate for those who have difficulties accessing those services.

“Placing social workers in this setting is a natural next step,” said Jennifer Elkins, associate professor of social work at UGA School of Social Work. “Rather than asking clients to come to us, we’re coming to them. It’s the living embodiment of the principle and value of ‘meeting the client where they’re at.’”

So far, UGA social work interns have been interviewing community organization leaders, identifying opportunities and threats and preparing resources.

In the next phase of the project, interns will use what they learn to develop an ongoing training to



Caleb Guice

“Athens is such a diverse community, and our library is a hub for many different populations. I am looking forward to seeing how the library becomes more inclusive and accepting for them all. ”

- Intern Liv Ricketts



Caleb Guice

“Social work services should be deeply embedded in the community in places where people trust and feel welcomed. The library is one such place, if not THE place.”

- Anna Scheyett,
dean of UGA School
of Social Work

“Through additional trainings in trauma and mental health at the library, we hope to eventually transform our focus to a community wide initiative of awareness and respect for those who have had traumatic experiences,” said intern Lydia Hawkins. Pictured here are UGA graduate social work interns Liv Ricketts (seated), Lydia Hawkins (right) and Simone Moonsammy (left).

help staff become comfortable in addressing the needs of patrons experiencing trauma.

The intent is to create a welcoming environment where everyone who walks through library doors can find the resources they need and to create an underlying culture of respect and support.

“Social work services should be deeply embedded in the community in places where people trust and feel welcomed. The library is one such place, if not THE place,” said UGA School of Social Work Dean Anna Scheyett. “Having library staff informed about trauma, so they can make the library as supportive a place as possible, plus having social work students who can help connect people with services they need throughout the community will be a novel and powerful combination.”

The project also includes a self-sustaining peer mentoring program for high school girls called Becoming Empowered through Education, Inc. (B.E.E. Club).

This program will train young women to help and support others following in their educational paths.

Programming Specialist Akilah Blount has been working to establish B.E.E. Club chapters at local high schools.

“We want to create a safe space for girls to freely express themselves, advocate for causes that matter to them and talk about life outside the classroom,” said Blount. “Eventually, it could create an opportunity for women throughout the community, including local residents as well as students at the University of Georgia, to connect and build genuine relationships with the girls in Clarke County.”

The Athens-Clarke County Library is the headquarters of the Athens Regional Library System, Georgia’s 2017 Public Library of the Year. Learn more at athenslibrary.org/athens. ■

Libraries empower children to become lifelong learners

Reading is an early indicator of academic success, and Georgia's public libraries are a place for children and families to build a foundation for early literacy development.

In many libraries, families can take advantage of special initiatives such as the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program, storytimes, early literacy stations, as well as services for children with visual or hearing impairments. Visit georgialibraries.org/kids to learn more or check at your local branch.

Early Literacy kits build confidence for caregivers in Sequoyah

Library card holders in the Sequoyah Regional Library System can now check out a Starling Kit, which contains a word counter that measures the number of words a child hears. When paired with the Starling smartphone app, the word counter offers a personalized experience for caregivers to set reading and word goals with a child.

Cognitive and language development in infants and toddlers depends largely on the amount of verbal

engagement they receive. The Starling Kits serve as encouragement for parents and caregivers to talk and read to their children.

"The kit held me accountable to not putting my daughter in front of the television," said Elizabeth Lemke. "It motivated me to talk and read more to my daughter. When we had the kit, I read to my daughter more often – instead of one book at night we read several. The goals provided a daily push for us to read."

The Starling Kits are part of a greater effort by Sequoyah Regional to promote early literacy and language development among the community. The system also is conducting outreach to schools and community partners to increase awareness of all its early literacy resources and programming.

"We want our community to know we are committed to early literacy," says Angela Glowcheski, assistant director of the Sequoyah Regional Library System. "We're so excited to offer parents and caregivers the tools they can use to set their child up for success."

Sequoyah Regional is the first public library system in Georgia circulating the Starling Kits and is doing so as part of its participation in the Early Language and Literacy Mini-Grant Program from the Governor's Office of Student Achievement.



Sequoyah Regional Library

"The Starling Kit held me accountable to not putting my daughter in front of the television. It motivated me to talk and read more to her."
- Elizabeth Lemke

1,000 Books Before Kindergarten creates tradition of reading for families

Twin sisters Kate and Emily completed 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten together at the Dalton-Whitfield County Public Library. They took every step together – book by book – all the way to 1,000.

“The day they completed was full of joy, but the most important decision was who would get the pink backpack as prize,” said Lizzy Stuckey, youth services manager at Dalton-Whitfield. “When I explained that all our backpacks are filled with books, the outside didn’t matter anymore. They quickly unzipped their packs and started exploring their new collection. That moment crystallized what this program is all about: building an early and enduring love of reading.”

The 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten challenge is simple: Read any book to your child, with the goal of reading 1,000 before kindergarten. The program provides a solid foundation of literacy and love of learning before kids start kindergarten.

“This program has been such a gift to our community,” said Darla Chambliss, director of the Northwest Georgia Regional Library System. “It builds confidence in our

youngest patrons, and I love the early connection it creates between the library and child - that this is a place of growth, learning, familiarity and positivity for everyone who participates.”

The program also creates a tradition of reading together for an entire family system.

“I often joke that the caregivers deserve a prize too, because they invest so much work and time into setting a child up for academic and personal success,” said Stuckey.

Northwest Georgia Regional Library expanded 1,000 Books B4 Kindergarten outside the walls of the library by partnering with Friendship House, a local day care and preschool.

“I love the early connection created between library and child - that this is a place of growth, learning, familiarity and positivity for everyone.”

They promoted the program to parents who had three or four year olds enrolled there, and the teachers collected reading logs.

“The most fulfilling part was attending graduation at the end of the school year and presenting completers with their own backpack full of books,” said Stuckey. “You could feel their sense of pride at achieving something big at such a young age.”

Learn more about 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten at georgialibraries.org/kids/b4

(continued)



Lizzy Stuckey

Thomas County builds literacy for young and old

Thomas County Public Library aims to provide a source for ongoing education and programs, as well as equality of services, as they build literacy in their community.

“It’s so important to strengthen partnerships with community organizations and local schools to increase our reach and impact to everyone in Thomas County,” said Director Trent Reynolds.

Working with the county school system, the library promotes early literacy through sessions at each branch, when books are given to participating families and a school representative teaches skills to improve literacy. As a 2018 recipient of the Literacy for Learning, Living, and Leading in Georgia (L4GA) grant by the Georgia Department of Education, these efforts will be strengthened and expanded.

Ongoing activities include weekly storytimes, 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten, and availability of early literacy computer stations to encourage reading as a fun activity.

The library also focuses on adult literacy; retired teachers volunteer to provide one-on-one literacy lessons, GED tutoring and weekly computer basics classes, and staff deliver weekly hand-picked large-print titles to patrons in four assisted living homes.

The library recently celebrated community wide efforts by hosting their 12th annual Literacy Fair to promote the importance of literacy at every age, in partnership with the Thomas County Certified Literate Community Program, city and county school systems and vendors.

“To see the community get together to help the families and encourage the beauty and benefit of reading is an absolute treat,” said Kathy Megahee, executive director of Thomas County Family Connection.

Hundreds attended the fair and enjoyed literacy activities ranging from letter recognition to simple math skills, vendors shared resources for improving literacy skills and free books were given out to encourage reading in homes. ■

“It’s so important to strengthen partnerships with community organizations and local schools to increase our reach and impact to everyone.”

- Thomas County Library
Director Trent Reynolds



Thomas County Library

An annual literacy fair at Thomas County Library brings hundreds of community members and organizations together for activities and resources to build literacy at home.

Accessible library resources give tools for everyone to reach goals

As baby boomers experience declining physical, hearing and vision capabilities, public libraries can be a source of accessible programming and technology to encourage independence. In partnership with Georgia Libraries for Accessible Statewide Services, Georgia public libraries also promote circulation of materials in audio, braille and large-print formats.

"I challenge myself every day."

Two years into her studies at Georgia State University (GSU) to become an elementary school teacher, life handed Miracle Wiley, now 29, a challenge she wasn't sure how to overcome. She lost her vision permanently.

"I dropped out of school," said Miracle. "I never met any blind teachers growing up; I didn't think it would be possible to pursue this dream."

A friend recommended that she sign up to receive audiobooks through Georgia Libraries for Accessible Library Services (GLASS) so she could continue to read for

enjoyment and to keep her spirits up. There were moments of tears and frustration, but eventually through GLASS's network, Miracle met others who were blind and still pursuing their goals. She also connected with teachers who were blind.

"I was determined to go back to school," she said. "I wanted to show my students that they don't have to fit into the 'normal' category to reach their goals."

She returned to school and completed her degree. Utilizing GLASS, she could download audio books of assigned reading and keep up with fellow students. Now that she teaches elementary school, she uses the audiobooks in her classroom with students.

"GLASS has helped me in my career," said Miracle. "I can read along with my students and introduce them to different types of books."

GLASS works with all library systems to give Georgians materials from the free national library program administered by the Library of Congress and the National Library Service for the Blind & Physically Handicapped. GLASS also provides eligible readers with access to Bookshare, a collection of over 650,000 electronic titles including textbooks.

"When you lose your vision, you lose the ability to do many of the activities you enjoy. GLASS services enable people to reconnect to parts of their lives that gave them joy, such as reading or



Deborah Hakes

“I was determined to go back to school. I wanted to show my students that they don’t have to fit into the ‘normal’ category to reach their goals.”

- Miracle Wiley

catching up on the news, as well as the opportunity to learn about other services,” said Pat Herndon, director of GLASS.

Reading materials and services for personal enrichment, education and entertainment — as well as any needed audio equipment — are sent to borrowers and returned by postage-free mail. Library users can search the online GLASS catalog for braille, recorded books and descriptive videos and place their requests. Reader advisers are available to help patrons in person or by toll-free phone.

In addition to circulating materials, GLASS hosts programs on a variety of topics, including over the phone book clubs for those who cannot travel to a local library.

“I hope my story teaches people not to let life experiences deter them from pursuing their goals,” said Miracle. “There are people who are blind and teaching and so much more. I am so thankful for those who took the time to help me reach my goals. I challenge myself every day to do more.”

Assistive technology is about all of us.

For Judy Belcher, the hardest part of temporarily losing her vision due to macular degeneration was how quickly it happened.

“When you are used to having your vision and then you lose it, it is so humbling,” Belcher said. She utilized Fayette County Public Library’s assistive technology to continue reading books in large print and then audio format, and she maintained her position as treasurer for the Friends of Library group

by using the library’s magnifiers, contrast keyboard and other equipment. Now that her vision has returned, she is a strong advocate in her community to raise awareness of the library’s resources.

“People often have the attitude that accessibility is about someone else,” said Pat Herndon. “It’s about people whose life has changed, and being sure that libraries have the resources to better serve everyone in their community. It’s not an ‘other’ - it’s about all of us.”

Assistive technology is one channel that provides equal access to library resources, as libraries have evolved from gatekeepers to the portals by which people access information.

In some cases, it’s as simple as patrons using a library’s magnifier to read the instructions on a pill

bottle. Every public library in Georgia has a larger-font and contrast keyboard, so people with low vision can use a computer more easily.

Your local library may have additional accessible equipment, for example Gwinnett Public Library has an Assistive Technology Lab featuring adjust-



Public libraries have a variety of assistive technology options for patrons. Some are as simple as a magnifying glass or calculator with larger buttons. Every public library in Georgia has a larger-font and contrast keyboard, so people with low vision can use a computer more easily.



A librarian shows a refreshable braille display at a public library. The device enables people to read digital braille by connecting to a computer or mobile device. The technology also can create braille files that can be uploaded. “This device changes people’s lives,” said GLASS Director Pat Herndon. “I knew someone who took meeting minutes with one of these; she could navigate through minutes as quickly as a sighted person! People read entire digital braille books on these devices.”

able height tables; JAWS software; a Prodigy reader that allows a customer to select reading with magnification or listening; an Intel Reader that converts printed text to digital text, then reads it aloud; high contrast keyboards; and a braille reader.

“Accessible technology in libraries give privacy and independence to those who need it,” said Pat Herndon. “It removes barriers and gives people the tools to help them succeed.”

Learn more about GLASS at georgialibraries.org/glass. ■

“Accessibility is about people whose life has changed, and being sure that libraries have the resources to better serve everyone in their community.

It’s not an ‘other’ - it’s about all of us.”



A UNIT OF THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA

1800 Century Place, Suite 580
Atlanta, GA 30345-4304

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
ATLANTA, GA
PERMIT NO. 213

CONTACT US

Georgia Public Library Service

1800 Century Place, Suite 580
Atlanta, GA 30345-4304
(404) 235-7200

www.georgialibraries.org

Julie Walker, state librarian
Deborah Hakes, editor,
dhakes@georgialibraries.org

Library News (ISSN 1546-511X) is published by the Georgia Public Library Service, the state agency that empowers public libraries to improve the lives of all Georgians.

This publication is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services to the Georgia Public Library Service under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act.

Information presented in this newsletter will be provided in alternative formats on request. For more information about Georgia's libraries, visit georgialibraries.org

Roy Cummings



With your Georgia public library card, you can build job skills, go to storytime, learn a language, get free admission to great places across Georgia and much more.

Find your local library at georgialibraries.org