

# Transformations

CHARLOTTE MECKLENBURG LIBRARY

## FOUNDATiON

# Libraries for All



photo credit: Spiracle Media for Charlotte Agenda

Libraries across the country are united in their commitment to a more equitable society. As of this writing, 183 public libraries – including Charlotte Mecklenburg – have signed the Urban Library Council's (ULC) Statement on Race and Social Equity. The ULC is an innovation think tank of North America's leading public libraries, and the statement is a shared baseline upon which to build policies and actions to make communities more inclusive and just.

Like organizations around the country, your Library and Library Foundation can and must do more. We're tackling this complex issue together with transparency, urgency, and a shared commitment to a more equitable community.



Foundation Board Chair Jennifer Green reflects on our role. "Libraries are a resource for the entire community, one of very few places that are open and free to all. We have a responsibility

to raise the resources needed to be the Library this community deserves." Vice Chair Gene Cochrane adds, "The Library Foundation is reflective of the Library. We help facilitate and amplify the Library's agenda around equity."



Equity is about providing what each person needs. When your Library reopened in June, all locations offered the same limited services – checking out and returning materials. At some branches, this was what customers wanted. At others, staff turned away disappointed patrons desperate to use Library computers.



"The pandemic has exposed the disparities in our community – in education, health care, access to information, and so much more. With the help of our donor community, the Library can help fill these gaps," emphasizes Second Vice Chair Helen Kimbrough.

## HAPPENING NOW

- In partnership with Mecklenburg County, your Library will invest \$1.75 million of CARES Act funds to locally procure, refurbish, and distribute computers to households in need.
- With a grant from the COVID-19 Response Fund, your Library has purchased 50 Chromebooks available for checkout from Library locations where demand for computer access is the greatest.
- Your Library is working with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' virtual learning team to ensure the Library supports remote learning through easy-to-navigate digital resources, live virtual help and programming aligned with curriculum.

JOIN US! | 11.05.20 | 7 PM

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*"The Charlotte Mecklenburg Library is stepping up in the face of the continuing crisis of systemic racism in Charlotte and across America. We are engaging staff from the Library and across our community to develop a sustainable plan to expand equity, diversity and inclusion throughout the organization; remove the effects of systemic racism and social injustice within the Library; and join with others to champion anti-racism, equity and social justice in Charlotte-Mecklenburg."*

- JOE HELWEG, Chair, Library Board of Trustees





We miss seeing you in person. But we know you're there because even in a pandemic, this community shows up.

In March, most of the country closed. Almost immediately your Library Foundation and Library pivoted to online programming and virtual operations. We sent weekly newsletters with Library updates and virtual opportunities, brought authors to you through *Final Draught at Home* and happy hours with publishers, and we listened.

What we heard was that, especially in difficult times, your Library is an essential provider of information, education, job help, digital access, entertainment and more, ready to meet ever-changing needs. Together with public, private and charter schools, your Library is supporting teachers and families during this year of virtual learning. With a generous investment from the COVID-19 Response Fund, Chromebooks will be available for loan at the four Library locations where the impact of the digital divide is greatest. These are only two of many examples.

The Library's impact is critical, and it wouldn't be possible without the steadfast support of this community of donors. Despite the uncertainty of our current environment, and with so many important organizations that need help, you've continued to invest in community through the work of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library. We couldn't be more honored and grateful.

They say adversity makes us stronger. Because of you our community is stronger, and we'll continue to get through this together.

Warmly,

Jennifer Green, Board Chair

Jenni Gaisbauer, CFRE, Executive Director

## New Faces

With the start of a new fiscal year comes transition. We are forever grateful to Crawford Pounds for his calm, steady leadership as our Library Foundation board chair, and we welcome Jennifer Green into the role. Thank you also to LaJuan Pringle, who completed his term. We've all learned from his thoughtful perspective.

We are thrilled to welcome three new board members:



**Sarah Dodd** is a merchandizing vice president at Lowe's, a Charlotte native and lifelong Library user. Sarah lives in Mooresville with her husband and son.



**Florence Kim, MD** is a specialist in neuropsychiatry and behavioral neurology. An avid reader and Library user, she is married and has two children.



**Hannah Terrell** came to the Library in 2018 as Branch Leader of the Allegra Westbrooks Regional - Beatties Ford Road Library, where she incorporates her passion for people and no-nonsense management style to her role.

## Board Members

Jennifer Green  
*Chair*

Gene Cochrane  
*Vice Chair*

Helen Kimbrough  
*Second Vice Chair*

Holly Welch Stubbing  
*Secretary/Treasurer*

Crawford Pounds  
*Past Chair*

Linda Lockman-Brooks  
*Nominating Chair*

Ann Caulkins

LeRoy Davis

Jennifer DeWitt

Sarah Dodd

Barb Ellis

Selena Giovannelli

Meredith Heimburger

Joe Helweg

Lee Keesler

Florence Kim

Sally Robinson

Paige Roselle

Hannah Terrell

Cristina Wilson

Elizabeth Star Winer

Lauren Woodruff

## Honorary Advisory Council, Inaugural Class

Sally Robinson, *Honorary Chair* | Alan Blumenthal | Robin Branstrom | Bill Gorelick | Molly Griffin  
Patty Norman | Bob Sink | Darrel Williams | Jim Woodward

# All the Authors, Community and Wine – Online!

## FEATURED AUTHORS



**INDIA HICKS**

New Release:  
*An Entertaining Story*



**MEGAN MIRANDA**

New Release: *The Girl from Widow Hills*



**CHRISTOPHER PAOLINI**

New Release: *To Sleep in a Sea of Stars*



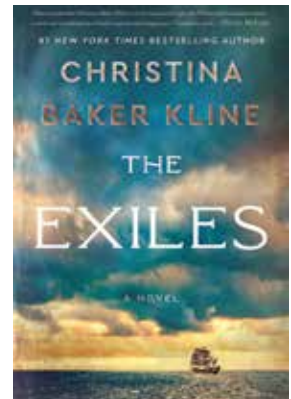
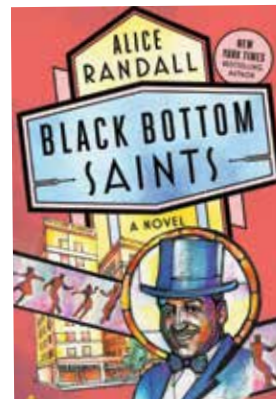
**ALICE RANDALL**

New Release:  
*Black Bottom Saints*



**CHRISTINA BAKER KLINE**

New Release: *The Exiles*



For the past six years, an ever-increasing crowd has gathered the first Thursday in November to celebrate books, reading, the joy and importance of libraries, and to support our Charlotte Mecklenburg Library.

**On Thursday, November 5, 2020 we bring the celebration to you.**

This year *Verse & Vino*, your Library Foundation's signature annual fundraising event, will be a highly-produced broadcast streamed to televisions, computers, tablets and phones anywhere in the world. The event retains all the elements you know and love – five *New York Times* best-selling authors, Sheri Lynch as emcee, wine, food, books, learning and laughter – along with **new interactivity, bonus features and surprises** only possible on a digital (not Zoom!) platform.

### Participate your way!

Guests can gather in the comfort and safety of home or any location individually or with friends, family, clients and book clubs. All *Verse & Vino* ticket options include access to the secure viewing platform as well as a combination of books and hand-delivered party boxes of wine, food, favors and more for groups of ten, or date night boxes containing an elegant dinner for two.

### First Edition Sponsors:

**BANK OF AMERICA**



### Wine Sponsor:

**McShane Partners**  
WEALTH & INVESTMENT ADVISORY

### Party Box Sponsor:



### Best-Seller Sponsors:



**Collector Sponsors:** Brighthouse Financial, The Duke Endowment, Foundation For The Carolinas, Novant Health, *SouthPark Magazine*, Todd Murphy Events, WFAE For a full list of sponsors at all levels, visit [foundation.cmlibrary.org/vvsponsors](https://foundation.cmlibrary.org/vvsponsors)

# VERSE & VINO

PRESENTING SPONSOR



**JOIN US FOR A  
VERSE & VINO WITH  
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**Tickets, sponsorships and  
packages are available now!**  
Visit [foundation.cmlibrary.org](https://foundation.cmlibrary.org)  
or call 704-416-0800.



# The CommonSpark

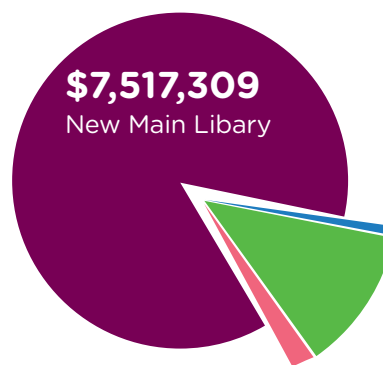
The CommonSpark is a multi-year, public-private partnership to infuse \$135 million into improving lives and building a stronger community in Mecklenburg County.

The campaign addresses an integrated set of needs: **a new Main Library uptown; a Support Services Center for non-public facing operations; system-wide technology, innovation and programming; an endowment for the future and annual operating support.**

- New Main Library: \$100 million goal, **72% raised**  
(includes \$50 million commitment from Mecklenburg County)
- Support Services Center: \$15 million goal, **100% raised**  
(fully committed by County)
- Technology, Innovation, Programming and Annual Support: \$13 million goal, **37% raised**
- Endowment: \$7 million goal, **9% raised**

*\*progress is as of June 30, 2020*

## FY 2020 CONTRIBUTIONS

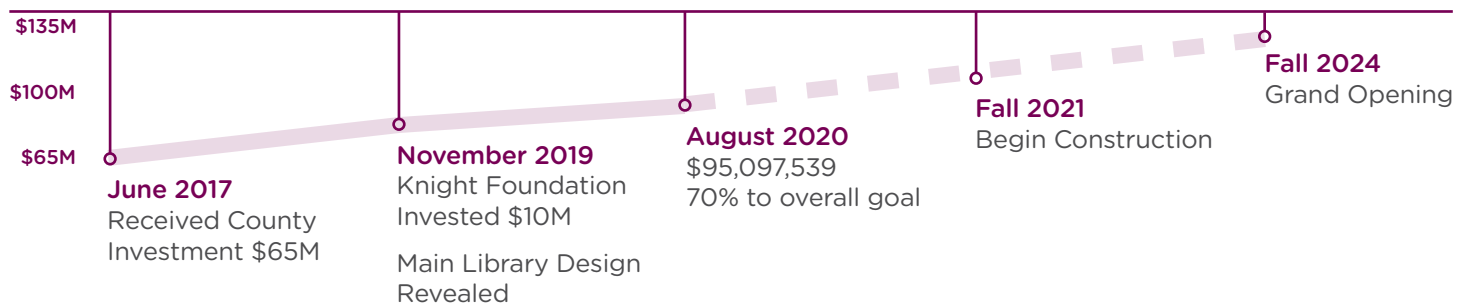


**\$12,835**  
Technology, Innovation  
and Programming

**\$1,124,675**  
Annual Support

**\$26,275**  
Endowment

## A COMMONSPARK TIMELINE



## Donor voices



*"It's the PUBLIC's library. It belongs to all of us."* - Chuck Barger



*"I want my son to grow up in a world where books are easily accessible to everyone."* - Beatriz Guevara



*"I love the Library because it embraces change."*  
- Helen Kimbrough



*"Libraries are holding the fabric of every city together."*  
- Isabelle Bradberry



## IMPACT

With your support, your Library Foundation raised \$8,681,094 from 1,546 donors toward the comprehensive CommonSpark campaign. Your generosity moved the campaign forward and made all the following - and more - possible in FY 2020:

- Print and digital resources
- Laptops for loan
- Digital literacy classes and devices for seniors
- Early childhood programming and Active Reading resources
- Epicfest family literary festival
- Historian-in-Residence program
- Partnership with Report for America, WFAE and Digital Public Library of America
- Reopening celebrations at North County Regional and South Boulevard Libraries
- Makerspace for North County Regional
- Library Foundation operating expenses

## Your Support is Critical

Annual operating support is part of the comprehensive CommonSpark campaign. We ask you to renew and consider increasing your annual gift to support today's needs and tomorrow's vision.

Especially during these uncertain times, your generosity is deeply appreciated.



*"It's a place for gathering and community and that just makes my heart sing."* - Ailen Arreaza



*"I don't think there's anything more democratic than a public library."*  
- Sally Gambrell Bridgford



*"It's a place for you, and me, and our creativity."*  
- the Milburn-Thomas family





# Connecting Community

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library connects people with information, with others, and with opportunities to participate in the life of the community we share.

Martha Yesowitch is the Library's Community Partnerships Leader, and her role is to build relationships with other organizations to expand reach and impact. "Libraries are fundamentally about people," Yesowitch shares. "Our community trusts the Library, and **by working together we can provide reliable information and opportunities to engage** around issues important to the people of Mecklenburg County."

The ability to leverage the complementary audiences and expertise of the Library and partners make a collaboration most impactful. Two new partnerships exemplify this approach:

## PARTNERSHIP CHECK-IN

For over a year, the Library has been part of the Charlotte Journalism Collaborative, supported by the Knight Foundation and part of the national Solutions Journalism Network. Nine partners – *La Noticia*, *Charlotte Observer*, *WCNC-TV*, *QCity Metro*, *WFAE* and *QNotes*, along with the James L. Knight School of Communication at Queens University of Charlotte, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library and Free Press – began with a focus on finding solutions to the affordable housing shortage. In recent months, the group has pivoted to address the urgent needs of our city's most vulnerable communities in the midst of the pandemic. A recent article on the Knight Foundation's website cited the partnership as a bright spot in local news coverage, and identified the Library as the group's "unique power source," providing neutral ground for civic support and engagement.



**Mayor Vi Lyles,**  
**Engage 2020**  
**Honorary Chair**

## Look Back, Move Forward

In partnership with Digital Public Library of America (DPLA), Engage 2020 began as an election-year program series in celebration of the centennial of the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote.

It's become much more – a safe space for our community to learn from one another, to put current issues into historical context, and to learn from the past to create a better future. Ongoing programs highlight the stories of Black women in the suffrage movement and throughout the civil rights movement, and the partnership is collecting and archiving stories of how this watershed year is affecting people from all facets of our community. "**Civic engagement helps to build a stronger community, and there's no better organization to provide the forum and the resources than the Library,**" explains Hannah Terrell, Branch Leader at Allegra Westbrooks Regional Library and co-chair of the Engage 2020 committee.

Engage 2020 is presented with support from Pivotal Ventures, a Melinda Gates company.



## Report for America

Local decisions have day-to-day impact, but local news is often under-reported or overshadowed.

In partnership with WFAE, Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) and Wikipedia, the Library has engaged in a national service program called Report for America. Three reporters – one embedded with the Library – will cover hyperlocal news, with a commitment to reporting *for* the community, not just *on* the community. The reporters will interact with community members in "news deserts" to learn what residents want others to know about their neighborhoods and share the stories locally and on Wikipedia, a free online encyclopedia. Reporter Dante Miller is exuberant about the possibilities. "**This partnership fuels my dual passions for community work and journalism. By using the immense resources of the Library I can enhance every story with solid, trusted research and context.**"

The Charlotte collaboration marks the first time Report for America has funded a position at a non-journalistic entity.

# We Can, We Do, We Will

*Reflections from Lee Keesler,  
Charlotte Mecklenburg Library CEO*



I was waiting at a red light one morning recently on the way to work, when I noticed a Library ad on the back of the CATS bus in front of me. “I CAN connect with my community” it proclaimed, and memories of what compelled me to respond to the Library CEO search in 2012 came flooding back.

Since 2012, I’ve learned just how many ways our Library connects with this community. It connects through literacy of every type, from traditional reading to digital, financial, civic, health and more. Through programs for the young, the young at heart, and everyone in between. It brings outreach services to schools, churches, parks, hospitals, jails and barber shops in every corner of the County. The Library provides places to gather in person and places to plug in with computers, Wi-Fi, and virtual programs and services. It’s our community’s scrapbook and record of its origins, people and story. Talented, caring staff solve problems, improve lives and build a stronger community.

The ways libraries gather, preserve and connect people with information will continue to evolve, and staff will continue to expand their expertise to include new technologies and the changing needs of a growing and increasingly diverse population. But the constant will be community – how we serve, unite, and sustain it. Charlotte Mecklenburg Library’s vision is to be “the essential connector of a thriving community of readers, leaders and learners.” It is and will remain the public commons for our community.

I will retire this spring to make way for the Library’s next leader. I’m not a big fan of looking backward, but it is satisfying to know that over the last eight-plus years we’ve become more relevant, engaged, accessible, digital and sustainable (READS). The credit for transforming an organization badly wounded by the Great Recession of 2009-2011 goes to our staff, who weathered that storm and grew from it; our Board of Trustees who are so effectively engaged in our work; our Library Foundation and the support it provides (financial and other) and the wonderful way it tells the Library’s story; our primary funder, Mecklenburg County; and our customers, friends and donors. Library is a team sport, and I cherish the opportunity to have been a part of ours.

That red light where I encountered the bus sits 100 yards from the Myers Park Library, formerly known as the South Branch Library. There, a future Library CEO and his brothers regularly accompanied their mother to borrow books – each time leaving more educated, inspired, entertained and empowered.

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library has survived over a century of social, cultural, economic and technological change because it has been connected, and is a connector. Like the sign on the bus says, “We CAN connect with our community.” We can. We do. And we will.



# FOUNDATION

310 N. Tryon St.  
Charlotte, NC 28202

## Ways to Give

**Your Library is a place for all, and every gift makes a difference. Help improve lives and build a stronger community, together.**



### **GIVE ONLINE**

One-time or monthly  
[foundation.cmlibrary.org/securegiving](https://foundation.cmlibrary.org/securegiving)



### **MAIL**

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Foundation  
310 North Tryon Street  
Charlotte, NC 28202

**Thank you for your generosity and your investment in the community we share.**

### **Foundation Staff**

Jenni Gaisbauer, CFRE, *Executive Director*

Karen Beach, CFRE, *Deputy Director*

Teleia White, *Director of Individual Giving*

Melanie Baron, *Marketing and Communications Specialist*

## A Gift for Tomorrow

**An investment in the Library Foundation as part of your estate plan allows you to support what you love, long into the future.**

Anyone can make a lasting impact through a retirement account, will, insurance policy or other vehicles.



**LEARN MORE** about planned giving at [foundation.cmlibrary.org/dewey-circle](https://foundation.cmlibrary.org/dewey-circle) or by contacting Karen Beach at 704-416-0802