

CHARLOTTE MECKLENBURG LIBRARY
FOUNDATION

transformations

SPRING 2022 NEWSLETTER FOR CHARLOTTE MECKLENBURG LIBRARY SUPPORTERS



Hickory Grove Library

SPECIAL REPORT

Understanding Learning Loss

and how the Library is meeting the challenge

CAMPAIGN NEWS

Tepper \$10M gift moves us closer to our goal

Panthers and MLS owners invest in Charlotte's future

UPCOMING EVENTS

Michael A. Almond headlines Final Draft in May

and Verse & Vino is back in person!

Dear friends,

A library means different things to different people. If you're looking for a career change, it's a job center. If you're new to the city, it's a welcome center. If you need help with your homework, it's a tutoring center. If you're searching for an answer, it's a help center.

One of our goals at the Foundation is to fund innovation at your Library with an eye to meeting the community where they are. Our Library isn't just a collection of brick-and-mortar buildings across Mecklenburg County. It's a constantly evolving public resource.

As the Library begins to welcome the community back into its public spaces, the innovative programs developed during the pandemic are here to stay. Learn more about how the Library met the challenges head on in the special report, "Learning Loss and the Library," in this newsletter.

Your support is the greatest endorsement of free and open access to information for everyone. Take a moment out of your day and read about the ways your gift has changed lives and built a brighter future for us all. Thank you for generosity.

With gratitude,

Jennifer

Jennifer Green
Board Chair



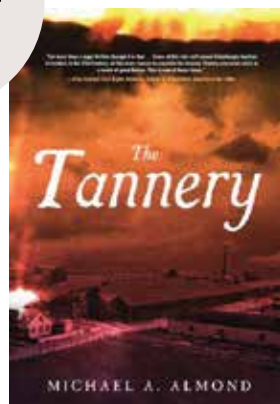
Upcoming Events

Final Draught: *The Tannery* with Michael A. Almond

Thursday, May 19 | 6 – 8 PM
Town Brewing Company, 800 Grandin Road, Charlotte

The Tannery is historical fiction at its best, a murder mystery and legal thriller whose twists and turns will hold readers' attention to the final page. Meticulously researched, this page-turning debut novel transports readers to another time and place, the story unfolding in the turbulent world of Post-Reconstruction social, political, and racial conditions in North Carolina and throughout the South. One ticket option includes an autographed copy of the book. *The Tannery* will also be for sale at the event.

Tickets for sale online at foundation.cmlibrary.org/event/final-draught-the-tannery



will return in person on November 10.

To learn more about our annual signature event, visit foundation.cmlibrary.org/verse-vino/

SAVE THE DATE!

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Learning Loss & the Library

Hickory Grove Library

As we begin to survey the landscape the pandemic has left behind, our focus has been pulled to the impact made on our national education system. Nationally, children returned to the classroom with at least six to eight months of learning and educational development lost to time. The great pivot from in-person to online revealed how ill-prepared U.S. education systems were for such a massive shift in teaching and learning.

But it also uncovered a well of resilience, prompted a much-needed reevaluation of our educational systems nationwide, and strengthened and expanded digital portals to move us closer to access for all.

In all these aspects, your Library served as a knowledge leader, nimble mobilizer, and optimistic partner to the Herculean work of the educators in Mecklenburg County.

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library has long been a national model for providing integrated and supplemental services to students, teachers and parents.

Meeting present and future challenges

In the short term, children and teens are playing catch up, while teachers strive to fill the gaps in learning while managing their own fatigue. As of early 2022, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) were still operating in survival mode, with approximately 50% of support staff absent during the peak of the Omicron wave of the pandemic. Administrators began filling in for teachers, pulling them away from their work in professional development and school growth.

The long-term impacts are equally as concerning. From a recent article in McKinsey & Associates, they report “(t)he fallout from the pandemic threatens to depress this generation’s prospects and constrict their opportunities far into adulthood. The ripple effects may undermine their chances of attending college and ultimately finding a fulfilling job that enables them to support a family.”

The pandemic also revealed the long-standing inequities that exist in the U.S. education system. While correcting these issues creates an opportunity to build the system back fairly and sustainability, it will require a large collaborative effort to do it right.

To read the entire article, visit:



mckinsey.com/industries/education/our-insights/covid-19-and-education-the-lingering-effects-of-unfinished-learning

No better place

There is no better place to help meet this challenge than what's already established in every neighborhood – the public library.

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library (CML) has long been a national model for providing integrated and supplemental services to students, teachers, and parents. CML was one of the first public library systems in the U.S. to go virtual during the pandemic – leading the way with online programming and one-on-one tutoring. They quickly scaled up their virtual services and created outreach kits to educate their patrons about the expanded virtual offerings. Library systems in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and Missouri reached out to Charlotte library staff during the pandemic for the strategies and workflows they developed to help meet the community need.

Before the pandemic hit, the Library had already established a strong partnership with CMS. Library staff work with neighborhood teachers and administrators to ensure the curriculum is supported and aligns with the Library's collection and resources. **In fact, each and every school has a public library staff member solely dedicated to them.**

Through ONE Access, or "One Number Equals Access," student ID numbers serve as seamlessly integrated Library accounts with access to everything the Library has to offer, putting the stacks right at students' fingertips.

Librarians send monthly personalized communications to every CMS school, keeping them updated with the latest programming, support services and more.

Collaborations between the Library and schools are relational, not transactional – building a cohesive and beneficial partnership that organically fits the needs of the school and its students and teachers.

"It's amazing how much can happen when you offer a child a table and a chair..."

— Library CEO Marcellus Turner



With ONE Access™ students use their school ID number instead of a separate card at the Library. As one of first, largest, and most successful integration of ID systems in the U.S., the program won the National Association of Counties Achievement Award for Children and Youth in 2016 and now includes access for charter and private schools, colleges, and county employees.

Resilience in action

While it's clear that the pandemic has impeded academic progress, some educators caution a doom-and-gloom mentality. Focusing on the social and emotional well-being of students and teachers may be just as important as the academic after this historic world-altering event.

"When we talk about learning loss, students are listening. Talking about them as permanently damaged learners? I think we need to convey some respect for what they have endured, what they have learned, and how they have developed despite the immense challenges of the last 18 months."

Janelle Scott, education policy scholar, UC Berkeley Graduate School of Education, "As K-12 students return, schools shouldn't obsess over pandemic 'learning loss'", Berkeley News, August 11, 2021.

As our libraries begin to make physical spaces available again, Library CEO Marcellus Turner reflects on how the environment itself can help motivate and support students. During the early days of the pandemic, he witnessed students sitting outside of a Taco Bell, using the restaurant's Wi-Fi to access their remote classrooms and do homework.

"It's amazing how much can happen when you offer a child a table and a chair," he said. "They need spaces that are quiet, comfortable and safe, where they have access to real live support and resources."

Even though places are opening back up, those virtual spaces aren't going away. With thousands of students attending online programs and connecting with one-on-one support in the past year, the Library has permanently expanded its reach outside the walls. This includes the new broadband access initiative in the West Boulevard corridor called MeckTech Connect.

To read the entire article, visit:



news.berkeley.edu/2021/08/11/as-k-12-students-return-schools-shouldnt-obsess-over-pandemic-learning-loss

If the question is “how is our community combatting learning loss?” then the Library is an important part of the answer. **The Library provides physical and virtual wrap-around services and programming to support our community’s schools.** It provides supplemental and experiential learning with programs like Storywalk® and makerspaces.

The Library has always been a place where all are welcome. It’s also a space where we can teach, support and grow our children and teens while healing the gap in their educational journey with intentionality and compassion.

Online Programming

From literacy workshops to college and career programs, from reading times to maker events, your Library brought 7,587 programs into homes this past year, connecting tens of thousands of students to educational, inspiring and engaging content.

Summer Break

Typically, summer is the most critical time of the academic year because the 12-week lapse between school sessions presents a risk to academic success. This summer will be more important than ever for closing the learning loss created during the pandemic. Through programs like Summer Break, the Library and CMS are working together to provide programming for students who do not have access to summer learning opportunities.



My student’s parents came to the end of our session to say thank you for providing this time one-on-one with their son. They expressed how difficult it was to keep their son engaged and excited about learning without the interaction he’s used to at school. They believe that this is a wonderful supplement for their son – and for them!”



Reading Buddies and the Active Reading Program

Active Reading is the practice of reading aloud a picture book with a child by asking questions, building vocabulary, and connecting to the child’s world. This research-based approach improves a child’s language skills, vocabulary, and ability to understand what they read on their own. The Library offers Active Reading Family Workshops and Active Reading Training. These programs teach adults how to share picture books with a child in a way that gets the child talking and thinking about the pictures, words and ideas in the book.



Max took a math test today on the material you covered with him, and he was the only kid in the class confident enough to tackle the extra credit problems. They call them spicy problems. I’m pretty certain your programs had a huge hand in all of this!



One-on-One Sessions

The Library meets individual learners where they are and helps them continue their learning progress in one-on-one sessions. The student’s needs are identified, and they receive personalized support and access to helpful resources. This is extremely beneficial for students who struggle in traditional classroom settings. Every month your Library offers 300+ one-on-one sessions.

Free Tutoring

With a Library card and internet access, free homework help is available to all students from a live, online, qualified tutor through tutor.com. Students can access up to 10 free tutoring sessions each week from home, school and even the Library. tutor.com is available for K-12, college and adult learners.



It was my child’s first Reading Buddy experience. She is a shy girl and just started to learn English. The Library staff worker was patient and kept asking her questions so she could participate in the conversation. She made a huge improvement, speaking out her thoughts and even asking questions! Best of all she was not shy speaking English anymore.





Bookmarked

LIBRARY FOUNDATION NEWS RECAP

For all the latest
Foundation
news, visit



[foundation.cmlibrary.org/
news](https://foundation.cmlibrary.org/news)

New Main Library Receives \$10 Million Gift From Tepper Foundations

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Foundation announced on February 3 a generous investment of \$10 million to The CommonSpark campaign from both The Tepper Foundation and the David and Nicole Tepper Foundation. The Teppers are the owners of the NFL Carolina Panthers and MLS Charlotte Football Club.

"We are excited about being involved in the Library project, which is an investment in opportunity and access for all," said David Tepper.

Digital Innovation Meets Equity at the Library

MeckTech is the Library's program that distributes free laptops to Mecklenburg County adults without a home computer. Each kit includes a refurbished laptop optimized for accessing the internet, joining virtual meetings, creating documents, and more. Over 2,500 kits have been distributed since its launch.

Not to be confused with MeckTech is MeckTech Connect, a partnership with Open Broadband to pilot a free public internet service in select neighborhoods in the West Boulevard corridor. This is a national model supported by grant funds from the Institute of Museum of Library Services. The Library has just completed the first phase of this project which connects 100+ homes to the free MeckTech Connect Wi-Fi network with a goal of connecting 800+ homes.

Help Wanted... and Received: Verizon Grant to Energize Job Centers

The role of the librarian is constantly evolving. Ever the knowledge specialists, select librarians in all 20 branches will be expanding their skills to become certified career counselors through a grant from Verizon.

Verizon's funding will help provide training and certification to library staff through NCWorks using the National Career Development Association curriculum. The training covers such topics as individual assessment, working with diverse populations, labor market information and resources, and job search strategies and placement techniques.

MoLi Hits the Road

On January 29 at Eastway Regional Recreation Center, a ribbon-cutting event was held for the new Mobile Library, endearingly referred to as "MoLi" (pronounced "Molly").

With funding support from Mecklenburg County, MoLi is part of the county's vision for residents to have access to high-quality education at any point in life and be prepared to meet the needs of employers. It seeks to connect people of all ages to the Library by lowering access barriers to services.

left: The CommonSpark is a public-private partnership to infuse \$143 million into improving lives and building a stronger community in Mecklenburg County including a new Main Library (rendering shown here).

center: Crews began Wi-Fi installations in 2021 as part of the MeckTech Connect program.

below: MoLi started serving neighborhoods in January. Learn more at cmlibrary.org/mobilelibrary.





Matthews Library

“Surprise!”

It was a couple weeks after Betty Verner's 80th birthday, and her friends and family secretly gathered at a beach house on Bald Head Island to celebrate. After the initial shock wore off and the cake slices were passed around, it was time for presents.

“I was handed an envelope from the Library Foundation, and inside was a letter saying an \$8,000 donation was made in my honor,” said Verner, “one thousand dollars for every decade I’ve been alive!”

Betty was moved to tears by this thoughtful gift from her son Ritch and daughter-in-law Susan. Currently a volunteer at the Matthews branch, she can't remember a time when the library wasn't part of her life.

“I have always loved to read,” she recalled, “when I was a little girl, I would walk a half mile to my aunt's farm near Hickory when the bookmobile would visit in the summer. I had to make sure I read 20 books and got my reading certificate.”

Her love of books and libraries has followed Betty throughout her life – a love she shares with Ritch, Susan, and especially her granddaughter Catelyn.



Betty (shown here with husband Lamond) has been a volunteer at the Matthews Library since 2012.

“I take pictures of my favorite books and text them to Catelyn,” said Betty, who has kept a running list of every book she has read the last 25 years.

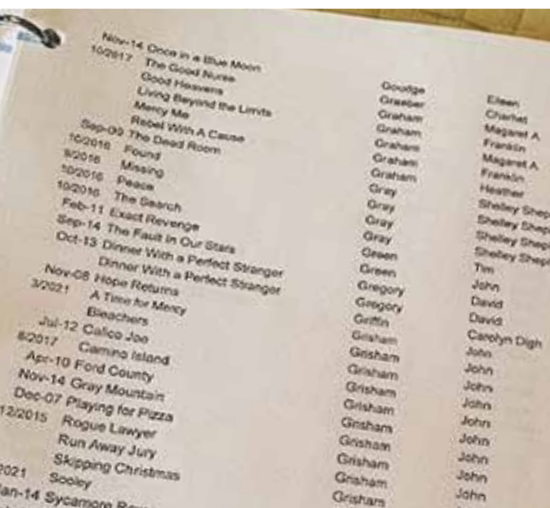
“She says ‘Mawmaw, I love the library so much. I want to buy all these books so that I’ll have a library of my own one day.’”

Cynthia McDonald, Matthews branch manager, said the funds will go toward a new quiet zone specifically for patrons to easily plug in their laptops and work in a private space.

“I think it's a great idea,” said Betty, “I’m always trying to be extra quiet when I go through the center area of the Library where people are working on their laptops. But sometimes the carts are so squeaky!”

When asked who her favorite writers are, she listed Mitch Albom, Christine Coble, David Baldacci and John Grisham as a few who never fail to capture her attention.

“I’ve never been bored a day in my life if I have a book in my hand.” Wise words, Betty.



Betty offers a sneak peek inside her cherished binder listing every book she's read in the last 25 years. For Betty's best-of list and more party pics, visit:



foundation.cmlibrary.org/betty-verner

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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 avenues. Learn more about planned giving at foundation.cmlibrary.org/donate/#planned-giving or by contacting Karen Beach at 704.416.0802.

The Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Foundation exists to help the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library improve lives and build a stronger community. The Foundation supports Library services, expands the Library's collection of print and digital materials, enhances programming for all ages, invests in innovative initiatives and strives to grow its endowment for future generations.

