

Best Sellers

Our favorite stories about your Library's impact • SUMMER 2020

Keep Kids Current!

Get them reading with our **Summer Reading Challenge**



● *This year's theme: fantasy and fairy tales!*

You can get on a bike after 20 years, and your muscle memory will probably keep you upright. You can hear the first few notes of a song from high school and start belting out the lyrics. Your brain is amazing.

We often say that a kid's brain can do even more than an adult's brain. But one thing kids can't do is maintain reading proficiency without practice. Once Michigan schools closed on March 16, many kids stopped reading. And that's bad news, because children are already predisposed to gradually lose reading proficiency over the summer. That is, of course, unless they practice!

"Studies show that children who read just 4-6 books over the entire summer will carry their reading skills over from June to September when school starts again," says Children's Librarian Donna Herman. "That's not a lot of reading!"

We've designed our Summer Reading challenge to help motivate and engage kids in reading about things they enjoy. Here's the kicker: they earn points through activities and reading, which entitle them to raffle tickets. Our August raffle is a thrilling, joyful event because kids walk away with bikes, tablets, and other seriously cool gifts. And in the process, they've honed their skills, become comfortable at the Library, and developed a lifetime love for reading.

The kids love the special programs related to our Summer Reading Challenge,

and we do, too. However, we don't know what will be possible this year. "We're setting up our tracking and our special events to be virtual through the end of June," says Leslie Acevedo, Director of Library Operations. "We have an online solution for registration and tracking, as well as downloadable e-books for kids. All of the performers are ready with virtual programs if needed. The challenge will go on!"

"Children are learning to read from the time they are born until the time they complete 3rd grade," says Kay Schwartz, Library Director. "After that, they are reading to learn. Kids who fall behind by 3rd grade never catch up. If we want to help Flint kids overcome the learning hurdles thrown up in front of them by COVID-19, we have to help them keep reading. We, and our sponsor partners, invest a lot of time and energy into summer reading because we know that it makes a huge impact."

Everyone can participate in the Summer Reading Challenge... newborns to adults! What's the best news? You can do it all online if needed! Sign up at fpl.info starting June 1. The Summer Reading Challenge starts June 20!

Every Gift Matters

Here's a quick trivia question for you. Which culture created the crepe?

Most people think of France first. And to be fair, the French started serving the specific food called a crepe in the 13th century. But the jianbing — a batter-based street food — originated in China around 200 AD. People have also been munching on dosa in India and blini in Russia for hundreds of years. So clearly, the word “crepe” may be French, but they don't own the market when it comes to batter-based yumminess.



Your Tuesday tips at Flint Crepe Company help support local nonprofits.

Now here's another question. What size gift must you give in order to make an impact on Flint Public Library?

Again, many people think of the generous gifts made by local foundations. And yes, those are important, valued and necessary. But they're not the only significant gifts. When you give a gift of any size, you make the Library better for everyone.

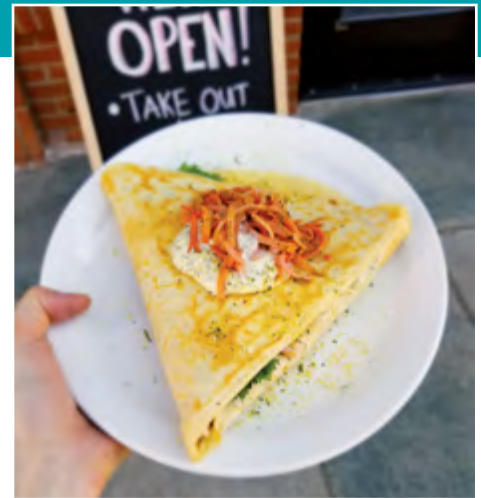
Flint Crepe Company provides a good illustration of this. Ten years ago, a staff member at this quirky local eatery suggested that they invite customers to partner with them in Tuesday Tips for Charity. Each week, the staff selects an organization to support and they let customers know who it is. The restaurant then makes a donation to that organization based on the tip number at the end of the day.

“The Library is an organization we all like to support,” notes Ryan Beuthin of Flint Crepe Company. “Simplicity is important, especially for a small gift. I can go online and complete the donation with a couple of clicks. The Library makes it easy to give. Whenever we have an open week in our giving schedule, we think about the Library.”

Make no mistake: those gifts, and others like it, make a difference! Here are just a few

examples of what a modest gift can do for your library and your community:

- \$10 puts a new paperback for young adults in the library
- \$25 buys a *New York Times* bestseller or popular movie on DVD
- \$50 buys four picture books for early readers
- \$100 pays for one month of children's craft supplies



Fresh, unique, local treats are the special du jour at Flint Crepe Company.

Times are tough, but overcoming challenges is not new to the people of Flint. “The memory and effects of the water crisis are not gone,” Ryan notes. “We were all still weary from that, and now there's something new. But the people of Flint know how to support each other. Our customers have been coming in, waving through our windows, and leaving ridiculously generous tips on small purchases. Tough times have taught us how to look out for each other... it's almost a muscle memory of sorts. And each week, those generous hearts come together to give a gift that impacts organizations — like the Library — all over Flint.

Perceptions can change. Flint Crepe Company has learned that they don't have to apologize to the French for putting unusual and international ingredients in their version of batter-based street food. And we want to make sure everyone in Flint knows that this Library appreciates and recognizes every gift of any size. Thank you for coming together to make Flint Public Library a better resource for everyone!

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— RYAN BEUTHIN

Reliable...Even in a Crisis

This year probably marks the first worldwide pandemic in living memory for most of us. That means we're all responding to a new situation and trying to figure it out.

Flint Public Library is no different. We've had to find ways to fulfill our service priorities and meet the needs of our Flint neighbors. Here are a few great examples that illustrate the day-to-day importance of having a reliable, responsive Library!

A TRUSTED RESOURCE

People rely on Flint Public Library for information and resources. Sherri called us during the coronavirus shutdown, wondering if we were going to have tax assistance available this year. Janet, one of our librarians, promptly returned her call, and advised her to check with United Way 2-1-1 as to where and when the VITA tax assistance might be offered after the Stay Home order was lifted. She also let Sherri know that the tax deadline had been extended, and then answered more questions about stimulus checks.

Many businesses and service providers went dark during April. Janet notes, "Everyone we called back was so grateful. With the lockdown, anyone who would answer a question is a help!"

A COMMUNITY HUB

As we started to plan for our move, members of the Fiction-Only Book Club were quite clear about their desire to keep meeting, even though the Library would be closed. We had found a suitable location...and then COVID-19 came along. But these folks were not ready to give up,

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and the members got to work! Alfreda suggested that we use Zoom for our meeting. Jim then offered to help set it up and run a practice session. We sent a "meeting notice" to our members and 15 folks showed up for our first-ever virtual book club meeting. They loved seeing familiar faces and sharing their thoughts about the book. And Zoom allowed people like Marilyn, who had moved away, to participate once again! Ann Manko, the librarian who heads up the club, notes, "They didn't want to lose members or lose steam...and they would miss discussing



books!" You can bet that this club won't miss a meeting, virus or no virus!

A 24/7 READING RESOURCE

For Don and Carol, staying home is a permanent reality rather than a temporary inconvenience. He has pulmonary fibrosis and cannot leave the house without massive oxygen tanks. Don loves to read, but had always relied on printed books. With the Library and book stores closed, that presented a problem! When Carol received an email from the Library that included the AskUs address, she said, "I'm going to ask!" So she reached out to see if there was a way to get e-books for Don.

Janet, the librarian who was responding to these emails, worked with Carol to make it happen. Fortunately, Don had a very old expired library card. Janet worked a little technical magic and renewed it for him without the typical in-person visit that's required. "Sometimes you need to bend the rules to do the right thing!" she observes. All Carol can say? "Thank you! Reading is the only thing Don can do. You reconnected him to the world."



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Our mission
is to be Flint's go-to place
to learn for life.

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The Checkered Flag is Out!

When Flint Public Library closed on March 1 and we began our renovation, none of us had any idea how radically the world would change in the next 30 days. On one hand, our timing was great. Our patrons were prepared for a temporary closure. On the other hand, the timing was not so great, because we had to push "pause" on our construction project after only three weeks!

The situation is still not entirely clear, but here's what we know as of when this newsletter went to print.

- We resumed the packing process the week of May 11. While we finished packing at Kearsley Street, Clark Construction wrapped up the work on our temporary location at Courtland Center.
- We started moving the furniture and shelving in mid-May. Once we have a certificate of occupancy for our temporary location, we can start moving the books and the staff into place.

So when, you ask, can we visit FPL at Courtland Center? This is where things are still a little murky.

We don't know when the State will allow libraries to open to the public. We also don't know what conditions will be in place when that happens. We're planning for possible scenarios based on what has happened in other industries, but we're just guessing at this point. At minimum, it's pretty safe to assume there will be requirements for face coverings, hand washing/sanitizing, social distancing, and deep cleaning. Some of those requirements might be challenging to fill, as there are product shortages all over the world. Once again, we will be moving into uncharted territory. This will definitely be a time when we all need to practice patience and forbearance with each other.

We are very eager to start serving you in person again! We will continue to update you as we have concrete news to share.

Please visit YourNewFPL.org for construction updates and to sign up for our e-news.