

Best Sellers

Our favorite stories about your Library's impact

SUMMER
2022



May 19, 2022 was a fabulous day for the residents of Flint. That was the day we proudly unveiled the beautifully transformed Flint Public Library!

This grand opening was the culmination of strategic planning work that began in 2014, as we sought community input to inform our future. That plan led to a clear understanding of our service priorities, and those ultimately helped us envision a 21st century Library that would fulfill them.

"We are so grateful to the entire community, both Flint residents and donors, for their support," says Kay Schwartz, Library Director. "When we started this project, the \$30 million price tag looked and felt daunting. It became even more challenging when COVID struck; slowing down our construction process and creating significant supply chain challenges. It

took tremendous effort on the part of so many people, but we are honored to report that the entire project is complete, and the cost is fully covered through donor commitments and the public bonds. We reopened our doors having achieved our fundraising goal."



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- Kay Schwartz, Library Director

Photo L to R: TK Thomas, Chris Frye, Anthony Alexander, Jacquinne Reynolds, Raquel Thueme, Ridgway White, Reta Stanley, Kay Schwartz, Mayor Sheldon Neeley, Lynne Hurand, and Isaiah Oliver.

This project could not have happened without the support of Flint voters, the philanthropic community, the Library Board of Trustees, the committed staff, our architect and construction team, and so many more. That hard work is paying off as people flock to see the results.

We welcomed more than 3,000 people to the Library on opening weekend, and they continue to stream in. (See the story on page 2 for early highlights about how the space is being used.) If you have not yet visited us, please make plans to come soon. You can find information about hours and upcoming programs on our website, fpl.info. We hope to see you soon!



We Are 'Over the Moon' Excited!

THE COMMUNITY IS EMBRACING THE NEW LIBRARY AND ITS FEATURES

It's no small thing to be responsible for \$30 million of other people's money. So for Library Director Kay Schwartz, public response to the renovated Library is a joy. "Hearing those positive comments hasn't grown old yet!" she says with a broad smile.

Ever since the Library reopened on May 19, people have been flocking in to see the Library, but more importantly, to use it. Visitors are identifying everything from their favorite chair to

their favorite meeting room. "I watch what is going on, and I'm overjoyed," Kay continues. "I think we identified the right needs and filled them with the right resources."

SO WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT THE LIBRARY?

- ▶ The Children's Learning Center is teeming with kids...and adults, who appreciate the comfy, grown-up sized furniture by our aquarium and Tinker Table!
- ▶ For the first time since 2019, we're back in full swing with programs for children, teens and adults. You can find all the latest information on our website, fpl.org.
- ▶ Our 19 meeting rooms are in constant use. So far, the Gloria Coles Sky Salon is the hands-down winner in terms of popularity! The largest event thus far was our *Learn for Life*

fundraising breakfast, at which we hosted 150 people.

- ▶ The Storytime Garden and the Terrace are immensely popular places. From family yoga on the lawn to patrons munching a snack at the tables, the outside of the Library has become an extension of our program space.

We're still working to finish some of the final touches, like our donor display wall and a few of our technology tools, so there will be more new things to discover in the coming months.

"We are 'over the moon' excited by the response that this renovation is receiving," says Kay. "More than anything else, we wanted this renovation to serve community needs. Based on what I see people doing and how it's being used, I think we have achieved that goal. That makes all the hard work worthwhile."



How Do You Draw Teens to the Library?

Tweens and teens are a tough audience. We know from experience that they're not too excited about the summer reading program. So what can we do to get them into the Library?

Ashley Nizinski, our Teen Librarian, is full of ideas. Older kids need a safe place to go in the summer. They also need to get out of the house and interact with other kids. Even if books are not top of mind for them, we want them to know about all the other amazing resources they can use and explore. This summer, Ashley has a broad-ranging lineup of programs to lure this challenging age group into exploring the Library.

"We try to expose students to different computer tools and applications to open new horizons."

The attendance sometime surprises us! For example, the most popular event this summer has been the "decorate your own book tote" program. We typically ask for registrations, but this time we kept it open to walk-ins. And wouldn't you know it...the kids just kept coming in! We had more than 20 of them busily transferring their imaginative designs to the tote bags we supplied, using puffy paint, fabric markers and

stencils. Who knows what artistic fires might have been lit by this simple activity?

The second half of the summer is focused on more technical opportunities for this age group. "Digital programs are a big draw," says Ashley. "We try to expose students to different computer tools and applications to open new horizons. Sometimes they know more than we do! But most of the time, they are excited to learn."

The two classrooms in our Digital Learning Center are perfect for classes because we have a drop-down screen and plenty of power access. We just invested in a new batch of laptops that have more advanced memory and processors for video editing and more. This will be important for the video editing, video game design and book trailer design programs that we are planning.

The Digital Studio also provides us with a fantastic teaching resource. Students can learn to record videos using our green screen. This allows them to superimpose a recording over different backgrounds and images. They can also learn to use digital editing tools.

To see the amazing student work done this summer, search **"FLINT PUBLIC LIBRARY"** ON YOUTUBE OR VIMEO.





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OUR MISSION IS TO BE
FLINT'S GO-TO PLACE
TO LEARN FOR LIFE.

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You Need to Know How to Read!

Bob Rawls is all excitement and enthusiasm when he talks about Flint Public Library. That's because he knows the role of the Library in raising young readers.

"I tutor students at Pierce Elementary, specifically in reading," he says. "To me, reading is the most important subject. Sometimes it's hard for kids to understand that message until I put it in their terms. When I ask a child what he or she wants to do for a career, I often hear about sports. That's perfect. I ask, 'How can you be a sports star if you can't read a contract?' That's when the light bulb goes on for them. They start to think about reading as part of what they want to do, not something separate."

Bob himself is an avid reader, and it runs in the family. "I took my kids to the Library all the time. They would hang out, read, and go to Storytime. Now my grandkids, who are five and six, read even more than I do!" he says proudly. "The kindergartener reads at a third grade level. That's what libraries do for kids."

Bob gives to the Library because it is necessary. "Kids can pursue what they want to do in life, but they have to have the basics. They have to be able to read and understand. If you know how to read, you can do anything."

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