

Best Sellers

Our favorite stories about your Library's impact

FALL
2023

GLORIA COLES
FLINT PUBLIC
LIBRARY

“It’s Such a Gem!”

Imagine Flint in 1888. Horses trotted along tree-lined streets. Most of America’s oldest businesses — including Coca-Cola, Kellogg’s, UPS and Harley Davidson — did not yet exist. But a group of civic-minded women living on Garland Street decided to form a literary club, which was a popular thing to do in that day. Women gathered at each other’s homes to socialize, but also to learn about various topics through presentations by members.

Fast-forward from 1888 to today, and you’ll be stunned to learn the Garland Street Literary Club is still getting together, 135 years later! That makes it the oldest continuously meeting club in Michigan.

Bobbie Stoltz Goergen is a member of the Club because her mother introduced her to it. “When women get together, they get things done, and the Library is a great example,” she says with a laugh. “The Ladies Library Association donated the original books and building that formed the basis of our Library.” That history, plus so much more, compelled Bobbie to write a paper about the Library for her presentation to the Literary Club.

Bobbie has graciously agreed to give a copy of her paper to the Library. You will find it, along with thousands of other fascinating resources, in the Local History & Genealogy room on the lower level.



Bobbie Stoltz Goergen (middle) was one of our first story hour attendees in 1958!

STORY HOUR—Mrs. Elizabeth Young, head of the Children’s Department at the Flint Public Library, shows youngsters one of the stories she will read at a public Christmas Story Hour at 3 P. M. Saturday at the main library. Carols will be sung in the program. The children are Matthew Dennee, 1019 Manning Ct., and Roberta Stoltz, 502 Crapo St. (Journal Photo)

“I grew up on Crapo Street, right across from where the Library is now,” she recalls. “That was all park land before the Cultural Center was built. I attended the first story hours the year the Library opened! All of us neighborhood kids played Red Rover on the front yard. I checked out piles of books, including my favorite fairy tales. Inside and outside, the Library was part and parcel of my childhood.”

Bobbie decided to chronicle the amazing story of the Library because it is integral to Flint’s history. Then she brought her entire Club to the Library,

utilizing one of the many free meeting rooms for her presentation. “I took pages of notes while talking with retired local history librarian Michael Madden,” she says. “He was unbelievably helpful, as was librarian Ann Manko, who helped me arrange my meeting and gave a short talk on Library services.”

“People don’t realize all the great things about Flint,” Bobbie continues. “Every time I have visitors, I take them through the city and show them. Flint has a tremendous amount of art and culture for a city of its size. And now the renovated Library is part of that tour. It’s such a gem! I hosted my presentation here so that all my club members could see what a treasure we have, and learn about the services this Library can offer. I want to spread that story far and wide!”

“Welcome to Flint!”

We all know that a 12-foot tall puppet is not real. But if you had seen Little Amal “walking” down Crapo Street on September 26 and interacting gracefully with people of all ages, you would have sworn she was alive. That sense of suspended reality is part of the mystique that makes her so compelling

So why was a 12-foot tall puppet strolling around the Cultural Center, and why was the Library involved?

Little Amal has become an international symbol of compassion and human rights. She carries a message of hope for displaced people everywhere, especially children who have been separated from their families. Her journeys are festivals of art and hope that draw attention to the huge numbers of children fleeing war, violence and persecution. Her urgent message to the world is, “Don’t forget about us.”

From September to November, Amal is journeying 6,000 miles across the United States in one of the largest free public festivals ever created.



Her creators, the Handspring Puppet Company, connected with tunde olaniran of Flint, who agreed to act as coordinator and creative producer for a Flint visit. tunde, in turn, reached out to the Library to help make the Cultural Center a stop along Little Amal’s journey.

Prior to the walk, kids learned about refugees, and heard Amal’s story inside the Library. There was dancing outdoors with a group from

University of Michigan- Flint. A choir sang. And then Amal began to “walk,” guided by her agile handlers and surrounded by well-wishers.

Her eyes are the only digital component of this puppet. Her graceful walk, her attentive head, and her hands extending to gently touch those around her are all part of the illusion created by the puppeteers. She is so lifelike that the kids came up to talk with her. We heard them saying, “You’re so brave. I’m so proud of you. I hope you find a home in the United States.”

Being a community hub is an important part of the Library’s work. We want to provide abundant and welcoming environments where people can gather for learning, dialogue or entertainment. The “Walk with Amal” provided a wonderful opportunity for people to come together and relate to the plight of refugees in tangible, lifelike way. We thank everyone who attended the event, as well as all those who helped make it possible!



Kitty (lower left) offers her own small treat as a thank-you to the guests who accept her invitation to *Learn for Life*.



“Every City Should Have a Library!”

Kathleen Gazall — known as Kitty by most — is pretty clear about why she supports Gloria Coles Flint Public Library. “Everyone should understand what this Library does for our community,” she says. “Most people think ‘books’ when they think about the Library, but it’s so much more. Early childhood literacy is one of the strategic priorities that I believe in wholeheartedly. We need to bring kids in here for storytime, or even just to explore. It’s so welcoming and open. Getting kids here is one of the best ways for them to understand what the Library is about and how it can enrich life.”

Kitty also finds that the Library is a wonderful professional asset. As a business manager in a family-owned downtown business, she’s always looking for meeting space. “We love

to host meetings at the Library for out of town visitors,” she says. “It’s easy and impressive. There’s plenty of parking. You’re surrounded by books and education and energy. You can scoot over to FIA for a quick sandwich in the café, or take an afternoon off to explore the Cultural Center. People



“I want people to come to our Library and say, ‘Wow! This is Flint?’”

say, ‘Wow! This is Flint?’ Their word of mouth is the best advertising for this City and our Library!”

Kitty also donates her time as a co-chair of the Library’s annual *Learn for Life* fundraising event. “This event is so uplifting,” she says. “Regardless of your capacity, it’s an easy give. It’s a no-brainer to support this Library and the important role it plays in our community.”

Her conclusion? “Every city should have a library. It’s not just for children, but for adults, too. It’s a place to enlighten your mind and enjoy social time. People are still buzzing about the renovation. I keep hearing comments like, ‘Why did I wait so long to go?’ Come here once, and it will become a beloved routine, a tradition for you and your family. What a great thing!”

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

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Come to the Library If You Need...

DATA AND ANSWERS FOR BUSINESS AND NONPROFITS

Have you ever needed to generate a mailing list, or look up national news articles on a hot topic? Are you a nonprofit executive looking for potential funders, or do you need to learn how to write a grant?

If you answer, "Yes" to these or many other similar questions, it's time to pay a visit to Gloria Coles Flint Public Library. We have a vast collection of databases that cover a virtually endless list of topics and information. Many of these are subscription databases that individuals or small companies could never afford. We have purchased access to some, while others are offered via Michigan Electronic Library. Either way, they are all free for patrons to use.

We have also expanded our Book an Expert service to include Business Law. Now you can register for a free, 30-minute session with one of our librarians who can show you how to navigate databases like LexisNexis and more.

We always love to have you visit the Library! We would be happy to help you find free answers to challenges you never thought you could solve at the Library.



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