

Best Sellers

Our favorite stories about your Library's impact

SUMMER
2023

GLORIA COLES
FLINT PUBLIC
LIBRARY

Meet Our New Executive Director!

John F. Kennedy once said, "Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other." With a vision of being Flint's go-to place to learn for life, we know how important a strong leader is to both our organization and our community. So it is with great joy and excitement that we welcome Ms. Taliah Abdullah as our next Executive Director.

Ms. Abdullah comes to Flint from the Arapahoe Library District in Englewood, CO. She has worked in academic, school, and public libraries in multiple states, and has served in management positions for 20 years. She is a champion and leader for equity, diversity, and inclusion in life, for libraries, and for her team. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary



Taliah Abdullah will assume her new role starting July 24, 2023.

Education, as well as a Master's in Library and Information Science. She is also working towards her Ph.D. in Information Science.

"The strategic priorities of the Library, and its focus on community, mesh perfectly with who I am and what brings me joy," says Ms. Abdullah. "When I visited Gloria Coles Flint Public Library, I saw a bustling Children's Room. I met friendly, helpful staff members. The space is

beautiful and it offers so many ways to connect with existing and new patrons. I look forward to working in a community that sees its library as a place for collaboration and growth."

"The Board of Trustees is thrilled to welcome Taliah as our new Executive Director," says Board President Reta Stanley. "She will bring experience, enthusiasm, great communication skills, and an open door policy to engage staff and deepen the connection with our patrons. We feel very lucky to have found her and look forward to the Library's continued advancement with her at the helm."

We invite you to attend a meet and greet for Ms. Abdullah at the Library on Wednesday, August 2, from 4-7 PM.



What Is Your Favorite Color?

¿CUÁL ES TU COLOR FAVORITO?

Imagine a young first grade student named Nicholas. He's at the Library for the first time with his class from Holy Rosary Catholic School. The librarian asks each child, "What is your name, and what is your favorite color?" The kids are practically jumping up and down, they're so excited to answer.

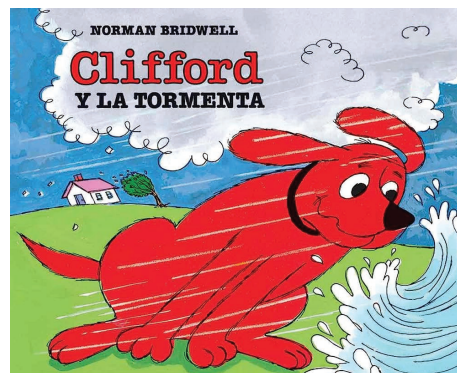
But when it's time for Nicholas to share, he just looks at Robert, the librarian. Then the teacher quietly whispers, "Nicholas arrived from Chile about two weeks ago and he only speaks Spanish."

It was Nicholas' lucky day! You see, Robert White, our newest Children's Librarian, just so happens to be fluent in Spanish. "I started learning Spanish in 7th grade," Robert recalls. "I spent time in Argentina while I was in college, and I really became conversational."

So Robert posed the question to Nicholas in Spanish. "You should have seen his face light up!" says Katie Badgley, Manager of Youth

Services. "He and Robert had a quick conversation, and then we moved on to a wonderful interactive storytime about spring, including a puppet version of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*."

During the reading and subsequent tour, Robert translated into Spanish for Nicholas. Each time, Nicholas beamed. Robert had him participating in all the activities, including hopping like a bunny with all the other kids. He also showed Nicholas the Spanish books to check



We have 435 non-English titles in our Children's Collection, including popular options like the "Clifford" series.

out. "My parents love to read, but we don't have any books at home yet," Nicholas confided.

This was Robert's first storytime for the Library and he couldn't have had a better result. "It's nice for kids to hear their native language in public places," Robert points out. "It's good for him to know he can get help in both languages. Hearing Spanish at the Library made him feel more comfortable who with he is and more proud of his culture."

The teacher was very pleased, noting that Nicholas often drifts off into his own world because he doesn't understand what is being said. But Nicholas learned two important things that day. By the time he left, he knew where to find books in Spanish. And he knew he had a friend to talk with the next time he visited the Library.

P.S. And for the record...Nicholas' favorite color is green!

What's Your Legacy?

Not too many of us spend a lot of time thinking about what the world will be like once we're gone. But we can find joy and delight now thinking about how our giving legacy will impact people in the future.

Linda Pylypiw is a great example. She grew up in Burton, but moved to Flint after graduating from law school. "A local attorney asked if I would serve on the Library board," Linda recalls. "I've always had a community involvement mindset, so I said yes. Little did I know that would lead to 10 years of board service!"

Linda got to know the Library very well. So when it came time to plan her estate, she put the Library on her list. "I don't have any children, so I'm planning to leave my estate to the organizations with which I've been involved," she notes.

Linda says her legacy gift is both a pragmatic and an emotional decision. "My giving now is structured based on my cash flow needs," she says. "I know I will be able to give a larger gift with more impact from my estate. And I also believe that if there's an organization that gives to the community and to you as a person, then you owe them your support."

Recently, Linda has had a fascinating reminder about how the Library supports this community. Her cousin Nadiia fled Ukraine with her daughter Olya and came to Flint in September of 2022. One of the first things Linda did was take both of them to the Library.

"Nadiia wanted to explore every inch of this beautiful building and she immediately got her own Library card," Linda recalls. It was a little tougher for Olya, who is not much of a reader. "Olya mentioned how much she enjoys anime, and the librarian immediately whisked us off to that part of the Library. I was pleasantly surprised at the breadth of knowledge our librarians possess, and their ability to suggest things that an 11-year-old from another country would enjoy,"

Linda shares. "They spent as much time as we needed to get Olya engaged. Turns out that Dr. Seuss was a big hit, and right in line with her English skills. Now we stop by every 2-3 weeks to get new books."

Her personal experiences illustrate why she is making a legacy gift. "I know that gifts from my estate will help people remember me, and will support the organizations I love," Linda concludes. "That's a great feeling."



Linda has introduced her Ukrainian relatives to many American cultural experiences, including the Library.

Visit fpl.info/support to learn how you can support the Library through a legacy gift.

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

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It's Official!

WELCOME TO GLORIA COLES FLINT PUBLIC LIBRARY

On June 3, we celebrated the legacy of former Director Gloria Coles at a renaming ceremony. We are now officially known as Gloria Coles Flint Public Library.

A cheering crowd and many visiting dignitaries voiced support during this event for the visionary work and leadership of Ms. Coles. Gloria Coles became the Director of Flint Public Library in April 1984. She was the first African American woman to hold that position, and she spent the next 20 years living into her vision of what a library should be and do for the community.

"Ms. Coles was an inspiring leader, a tireless advocate, and a force for change,"



L to R: Executive Director Kay Schwartz, Gloria Coles, and Board President Reta Stanley

says Board President Reta Stanley. "She retired in 2004 but has been actively involved in the community and with the Library ever since. We often choose to honor significant people after they have passed away, but it is far better to do so while they are alive. Therefore, the Board of Trustees was pleased to vote unanimously in favor of this name change."