

Best Sellers

Our favorite stories about your Library's impact • FALL 2017

Did You Know? Creative Play Supports Literacy

When you think about helping a child learn to read, what comes to mind? Maybe you picture alphabet flash cards (like the good old days!). Maybe you recall the ABC song, or think simply about reading to a child while he or she follows along.

All of these techniques play a role in early literacy. Flint Public Library's "Every Child Ready to Read" program includes talking, singing, reading, writing and playing. Each of these activities helps children become better prepared to read.

How does playing fit in? Creative play helps children learn to put thoughts into words. It also helps them learn about how spoken and written words can stand for real objects and experiences.

The literacy connection got Raquel Thueme's attention when she heard about our Tinker Table fundraiser last year. The

Friends of the Flint Public Library provided a matching gift challenge to raise money for this project. Raquel works for the Ruth Mott Foundation, and she also personally supports the Library. "When I heard about the Tinker Table and the match challenge, I got excited," she says. "I know how important early literacy skills are for reading readiness. The Tinker Table helps kids develop pre-reading skills that they won't get from playing on a cell phone! I also love seeing parents and kids interacting together as they play."

The Tinker Table consists of three 10' frames with four tops. One top allows children to explore with Tinker Toys; one with lights; and two with Duplo blocks. The young patrons use the Tinker Table to learn colors, shapes, eye-hand coordination, and how to play nicely with others. "Kids absolutely love it," says Librarian Donna Comstock-Herman. "Their eyes light up, and

they don't want to leave!" The table is busy from open until close.

"The Library is one of the most welcoming and diverse places in Flint," says Raquel. "I see people of all ages doing all kinds of different things every time I visit. This truly is the community resource, just like my local library was for me when I was a kid. I love giving back to a place that welcomes everyone."

● *The Tinker Table is a huge hit with kids!*



You'd be amazed what visits to the Library can do for reading readiness! Bring your child and let us help you do the simple things that will have a big impact.

Learning by Doing

How do kids learn the skills they need for career success? In a word: experience. They need adults who will show them the ropes, nurture their talents, and encourage them as they learn. That's what the Summer Youth Initiative (SYI) is all about. And your Library is right in the middle of it!

“We've had SYI kids in the Library since 2002,” says Michael Madden, Librarian and supervisor of the SYI team. “The Library is able to accomplish significant projects with the extra manpower. Students learn valuable skills and are paid for their

work. The money comes from a grant, so it doesn't impact the Library's budget. We believe it is a great win-win for the community.”

What is the goal of this effort? “I want to foster curiosity,” Michael says. “Students learn that Google is not the be all and end

all when it comes to finding information. That leads to great conversations and explorations. One student was filing books, and learned what Chanukah was about. Another student questioned an obituary written in May for someone who died in November. I showed him how to use other Library resources to search. We found that the person had drowned, then been covered by ice, but his body wasn't discovered until May. We worked on 'house histories' to document when houses near the Library were built, and who owned them. We have done the same with school histories, to record interesting facts about local schools. Curiosity creates perseverance, and it energizes students to seek more than surface answers. That's a lifelong skill.”

Six students worked with Michael in reference, and eight of them worked with Children's Services. Each student worked 20 hours per week for 10 weeks. “They learn to ask questions, and develop problem solving skills,” Michael notes. “Many of them go on to college, and their Library experience pays off. These skills have lifetime value.”



● The SYI Library Team of 2017

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NEED A SCHOOL SONG FROM THE 60S? ASK A LIBRARIAN!

Clare Swanson had a problem. Her group, the Mastersingers, had been asked to play and sing the Flint Central High fight song for a school reunion. One small challenge: she had no words, and no music!



● *The long-lost Central fight song*

"Everyone thought I would surely have it, since I taught music and theater at Central from '65-'70," Clare says. "That was 50 years ago! No way did I still have it!"

So Clare got in touch with the Library, and Michael Madden started the hunt. Because he and his SYI kids are able to record so much local history, he knew that

the notebook of information about Flint Central High School contained many golden nuggets...including the words to the fight song! Michael knew the tune, so he sang it to Clare. She recognized that the tune was the same one used by the University of Wisconsin. So he dug up the music, paired it with the words, and voila! Clare and the Mastersingers were a rousing success!

"This was another great example to the SYI kids that the Library answers questions you can't answer with online research alone," Michael notes with a smile.

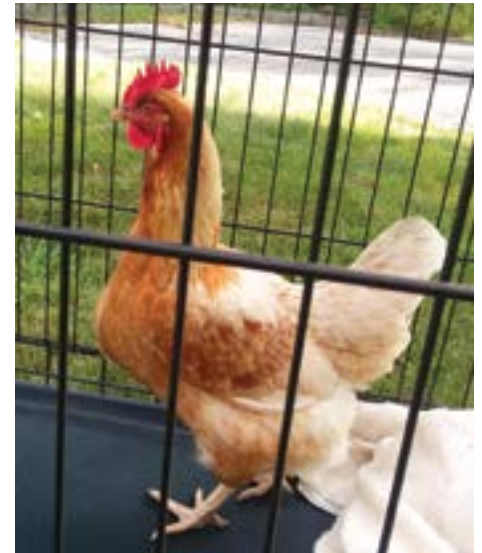
CHICKENS DRAW A CROWD

If someone says, "Cinderella," what comes to mind? You may conjure up a princess from Disney. But many local kids now think of a chicken!

Julie Appleton took two of the SYI students out to community locations to help with the Summer Reading Challenge. This summer's theme was "building a better world," and one of the subjects was gardening and farming.

"That's when it hit me...the chickens could be my 'show and tell,'" Julie laughs. "We keep chickens at home, and Cinderella loves people. So I brought her in and introduced her to the SYI kids."

Cinderella was a revelation. "The kids



● *Cinderella drew a crowd at every stop!*

had never seen a chicken," Julie says. "They had lots of questions, like, 'Is it a boy or a girl? How many eggs do they lay? Can they fly?' She was just as much of a hit with the SYI kids as the ones who met her during our outreach!"

Doris and Cameron went with Julie on her weekly visits to day schools and camps. "We made a great team," she notes. "The kids took responsibility for setting up, organizing supplies, and taking attendance. That sense of personal accountability and commitment will serve them well as they move forward with their careers."

Make a Gift. Double Your Impact!

Ruth Mott Foundation offers matching grant to support FPL.

We're helping kids get ready to read and fall in love with books, and we need your help. The Ruth Mott Foundation will double new and increased gifts to the Library. Please help us earn every single dollar they are offering! Use the enclosed envelope to double your gift. You can give any amount, as many times as you like, from now until June 30, 2018.

Thank you for helping Flint kids get ready to read!





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

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Memory Lane Meets the Technology Superhighway

When did you last think about your 8th grade math teacher? Could you even recall his or her name?

Librarian Alonzo Hill took an unexpected trip down memory lane this summer. He needed to contact a patron who wanted to schedule a Book an Expert session. "I took one look at the name Jacqueline Parks and instantly thought of my math teacher," Alonzo recalls. "But I thought there was no way it could be her."

He called, and was immediately transported back to 8th grade. "She has a distinctive voice, and I knew it was the same person as soon as she answered," Alonzo says. "She remembered my name, but couldn't put a face with it."

That changed the moment Ms. Parks walked into the Library. Student and teacher knew each other right away. "She still looks exactly the same," Alonzo says in disbelief. "The only

difference is how much bigger she looked to me when I was in 8th grade!"

Teacher and student flipped roles for the day, as Alonzo helped Jacqueline load Overdrive and then synch her iPhone and iPad so she could download books and magazines. "We spent a little over an hour and got her all set up," Alonzo says. "She told me if she had any trouble she would be back. Since I haven't seen her, I guess that means she did her homework and learned what she needed to learn!"

Book an Expert helps patrons improve their digital literacy. Your Librarians have a broad range of expertise! "You can learn to use your tablet or smart phone, social media, local history resources, Overdrive, and much more," says Alonzo. "The sessions are free...we just ask that you call a couple of weeks in advance so we can schedule time with the right person."

If your trip down the technology superhighway could use a little fuel, please contact the Library at 810.249.2569 to Book an Expert.