

Best Sellers

Our favorite stories about your Library's impact

WINTER
2022



“It Was Like Heaven to Be at the Library!”

Rita's Dibert's art career has thrived since her beginnings in Flint.



We have received numerous campaign gifts from many people over the last two years.

But for sheer distance, Rita Dibert is the hands-down winner. She's an expat who has lived in New Zealand for the last 28 years but still keeps in touch. When she read about our renovation project in Flintside, Rita reached out to navigate the process of making an international gift.

Why would someone who no longer lives in this country, much less in Flint, go to so much effort? “I can count on one hand the number of books we had in the house when I was a child,” Rita recalls. “So the

Library was my favorite place. My sister and I would bike to the Library, check out the maximum number of books, and then rush home to start reading. I guess it's okay to confess that I used to cut my typing class at Central and go next door instead! It was like heaven to be at the Library.”

Rita is an accomplished artist and art educator whose career took her to New Zealand in 1994. She found that her tiny town's library was a far cry from what Flint had to offer. “To use local vernacular, I was gobsmacked when I found out I had to pay \$5 per year to use the library, and another \$1 for every fiction book I wanted to check out! To make matters worse, my local library has actually started selling off rare and first editions from other countries to make room for what they call more ‘indigenous materials.’ The process is fraught with disagreement, to put it mildly! I never realized how blessed we were to have our beautiful Flint Public Library, with its broad and deep collection, until I left it behind.”



A photo celebrating one of Rita's Wide Awake Club wins!

So why did Rita want to make a gift? “Flint was a wonderful place to grow up, and books were a huge part of my childhood,” she says nostalgically. “I remember racing home every Sunday to look up the weekly Wide Awake Club topic in the Flint Journal. You could submit a drawing, poem or story about that topic, and each week's winner received a real book from the Journal. I'm trying to downsize as I get older, but I can't seem to part with those Bobsey Twins books that I won! I want everyone to have the sense of giddy joy that comes from being able to read as much and as often as you want.”

DO YOU SHARE RITA'S LOVE OF THE LIBRARY?

You can give safely and securely online at fpl.info/donate or send your gift to 1026 E. Kearsley St., Flint MI 48503. We appreciate our donors so much!



THE FRIENDS' CAMPAIGN SUPPORT

The Friends organization gives an annual gift to help fund projects or programs the Library could not otherwise afford. Last year, they provided a community inspiration gift to kick off the public phase of our campaign. "Our \$55,000 total gift was a stretch for us," Grace notes. "But we wanted to honor the tradition and future of the Friends. Now each time someone uses the Friends of the Flint Public Library Meeting Room, they will be reminded of the generous volunteers who work so hard on behalf of the Library. And each person who sees the mural we have dedicated to Dr. Bobby Mukammala will be reminded of both the people and the institutions that make Flint such a wonderful community."

"Right Down to the Last Chair!"

FRIENDS OF THE FLINT PUBLIC LIBRARY WENT THE DISTANCE TO SUPPORT OUR MOVE

You know those friends who help out when you're moving? The ones who stay behind and clean out every square inch of your old house after you've left? We have Friends like that!

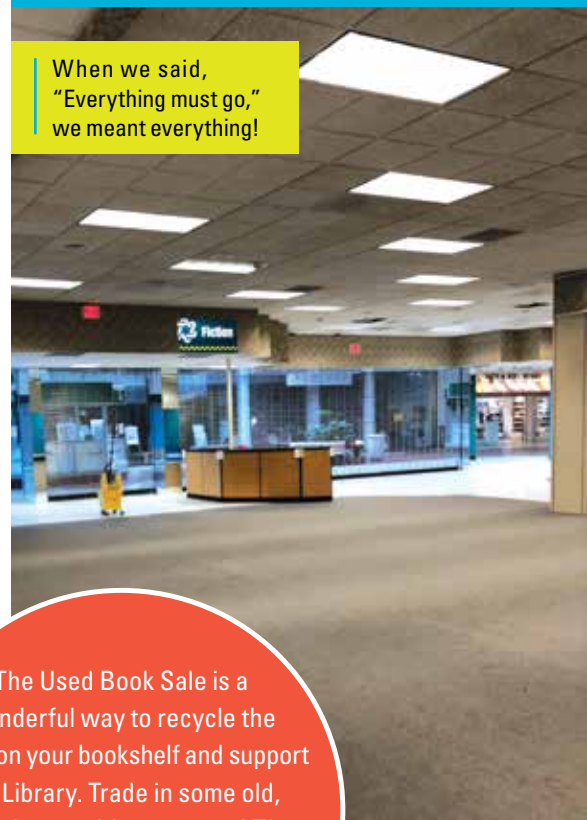
The Friends of the Flint Public Library invested hundreds of volunteer hours after we moved out of Courtland Center to organize and sell everything that wasn't tied down. Friends President Grace Tucker had two goals for this work. "We didn't want anything to go into a landfill or a dumpster if we could help it," she says. "We also wanted to raise money for the capital campaign."

Thanks to the generous gift of time from many Friends members, both

of those goals were met. "We sold or donated everything, right down to the last chair! We sold 10,000-15,000 books as well. All of that work netted more than \$15,000 for the Library." Anything that did not sell was donated to organizations throughout the community.

The Friends have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for Flint Public Library since 1969, when they got involved with the used book sale. "It's safe to say that we've sold 750,000 or more items in that time," Grace notes. "We are especially grateful to the Flint Farmers Market for hosting our sale while the Library was being renovated. We are also extremely grateful to Dr. Bobby Mukkamala, who provided storage space for our books between sales. We could never afford to rent such spaces. This generous community support allowed us to do our work and contribute to the Library."

When we said, "Everything must go," we meant everything!



The Used Book Sale is a wonderful way to recycle the items on your bookshelf and support the Library. Trade in some old, come home with some new! The next Friends book drop will be Saturday, April 2. Check fpl.info for details.

Brotherhood. Hope. Peace.

CELEBRATING DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

In 1985, Gloria Coles was the director of Flint Public Library. She decided to host a program to honor Dr. King at the Library because she thought his words of brotherhood, hope and peace were important to the entire community.

They were important in 1985, and '86, and '87...and they still resonate today. That's why Flint Public Library celebrates this national holiday every year with a program to unite people in honor of Dr. King.

Our celebration has grown to be one of the largest in the community, with approximately 300 people attending. This year, since the Library has not yet reopened, we planned to do a live event in partnership with Flint Institute of Arts. That was the plan until COVID reared its ugly head (again) and forced us to pivot to a virtual event.

But that pivot turned out to be a blessing. We have capacity for 100 people to attend a Zoom event. Unbeknownst to us, NBC 25 was one of the Zoomers, and they posted the entire event on their

website. At last count, more than 2,000 people have viewed some part of the celebration!

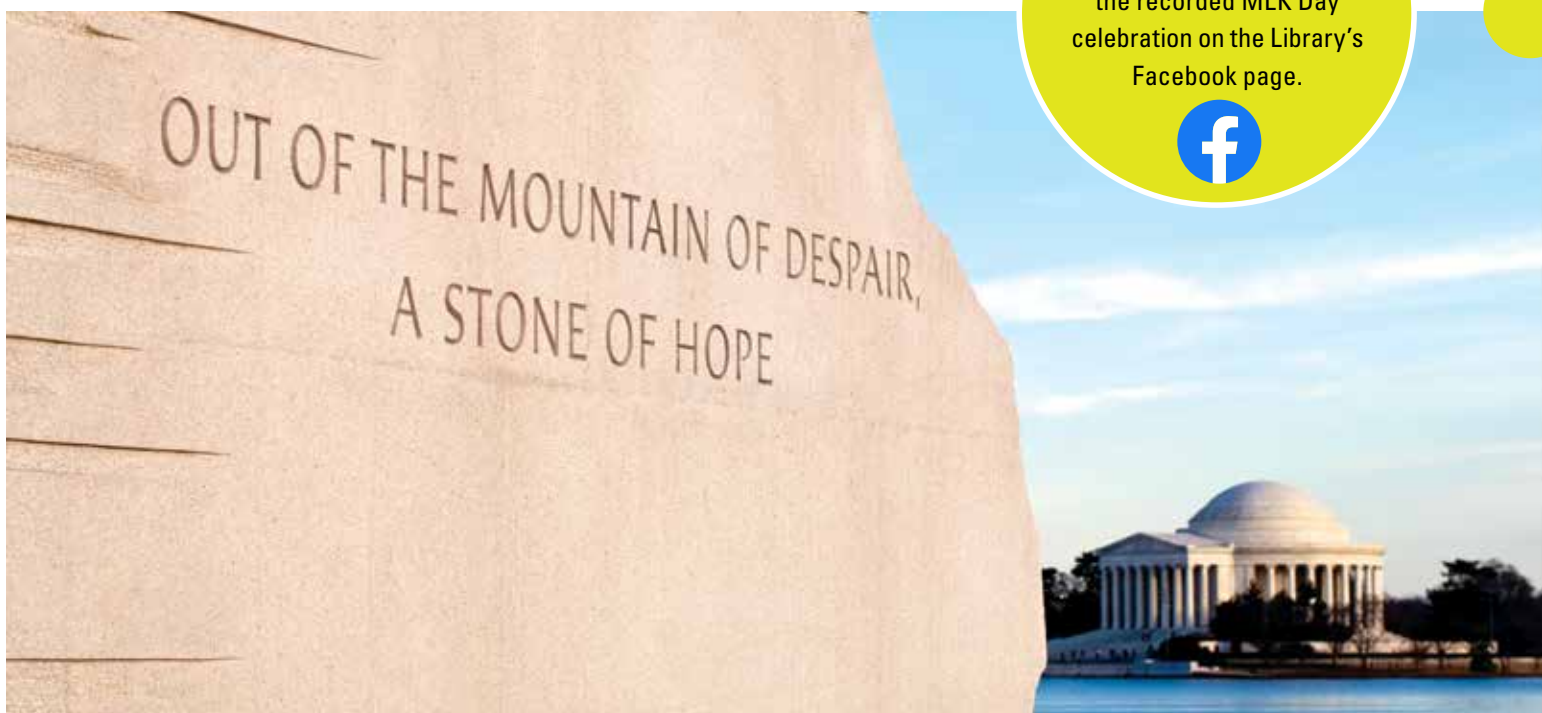
"One of our priorities is to be a community hub," notes Kay Schwartz, Library Director. "The pandemic, combined with our renovation, has made this work challenging. But we have never ceased our efforts. Thanks to rapid-fire work by our staff, and the partnership of organizations like FIA and NBC 25, we were able to reach thousands of people who would not have been able to participate in the live event. 'Community' is being redefined every day. The Library is honored to play an ongoing role in bringing all people together for conversation, reflection, education and entertainment."

"I thought it was terrific. Debra Furr-Holden delivered her thoughts with heartfelt authenticity and Mr. Rhymes' young man just hit the ball out of the park. Loved it all and was so glad to attend. Thanks everyone. If there was ever a time that [we] needed to hear Dr. King's words, it surely is now. Good job!"

- Email from a participant

JOIN YOUR COMMUNITY!

You can find a link to the recorded MLK Day celebration on the Library's Facebook page.



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

Everything felt temporary and a bit surreal during this past fiscal year.

We opened FPL @ Courtland Center in July 2020 after a three-month COVID delay, and adjusted to providing library services during a pandemic. Distancing and cleaning seem ordinary now. But it was a big deal to figure out all the unknowns! We are grateful to our patrons for their patience and support.

Ongoing pandemic concerns meant that our temporary facility was never as full as we imagined it could be. However, the Library was an important place for people to come for information, entertainment, computer access, and other services. In addition to being a place, the Library was also a service provider. We saw marked increases in web-based and digital download services that allowed patrons access from the comfort of home.

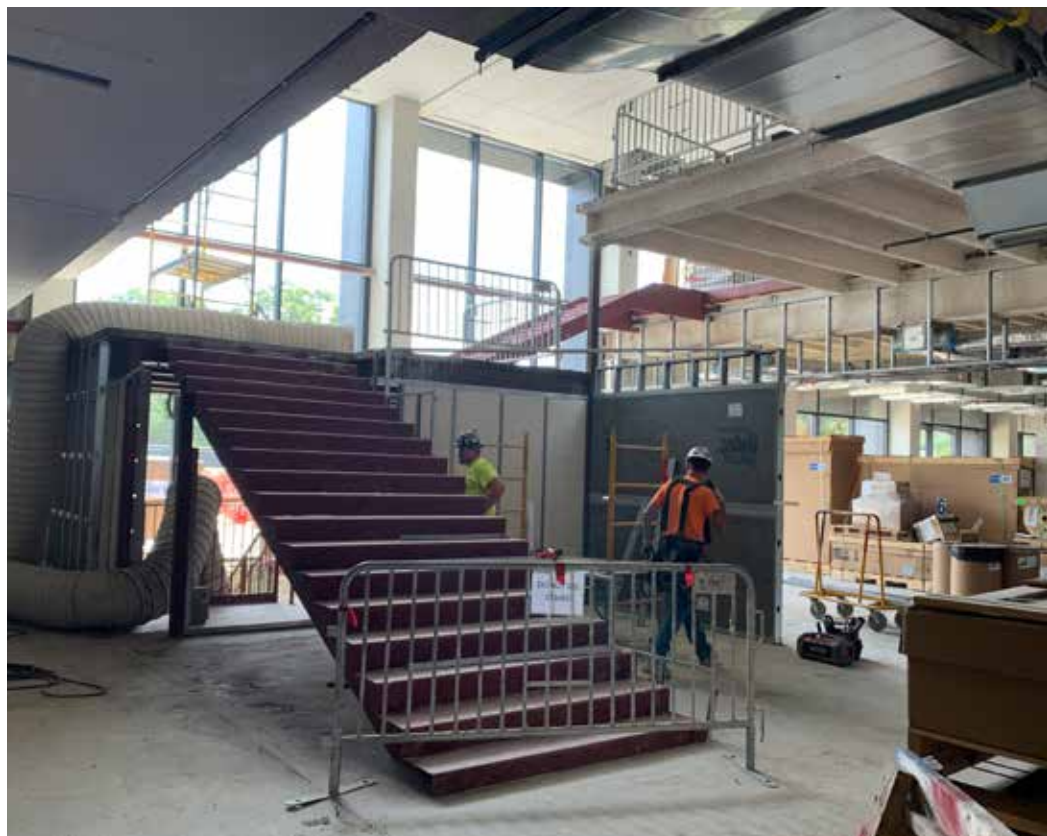
We also started the renovation process in earnest! Our building transformation kicked into high gear as the entire interior was gutted down to the walls. We featured regular updates to the community via our project website. This allowed people to see "behind the curtain" into what was happening. The building will be spectacular when it is complete in 2022!

We continued to focus on our service priorities, offering both online, in-person and hybrid programs.

- ▶ Early Childhood Literacy: helping parents and caregivers prepare children to read, and exposing kids to STEM programming.
- ▶ Digital Learning: filling the technology education gap by exposing students to aspects of computer science, and making technology accessible to the public.

- ▶ Community Hub: providing abundant and welcoming environments (virtual or physical) where people can gather for learning, dialogue or entertainment.

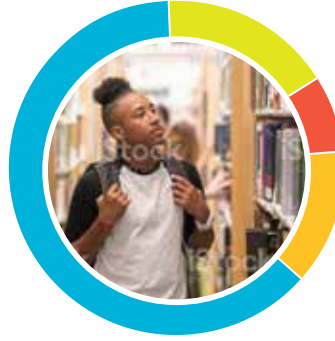
We sincerely and gratefully thank the residents of Flint who continue to demonstrate their appreciation for and support of Flint Public Library.





REVENUE

● Property Taxes*	\$3,319,956
● Grants, Memorials and Gifts	\$842,561
● State Aid and Fines	\$264,368
● Interest Income	\$17,357
● Other	\$37,919
Total Revenue	\$4,482,161



EXPENSES

● Personnel	\$2,198,136
● Operations	\$570,691
● Maintenance	\$253,187
● Grants Expended	\$439,668
Total Expenses	\$3,461,681



NOTE:

Revenue in excess of expenses is assigned for use in FY 22 as follows:

● Grant purposes	\$326,118
● Operations	\$694,362
Total assigned for use in FY 22	\$1,020,480

* The Library is funded by a permanent 2 mill property tax. An additional 2.0 mill was approved by voters for 2012-2021 and renewed for 2022-2031.

Thank You to Our Generous Donors

JANUARY - DECEMBER 2021

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**We sincerely
thank the entire
Flint community for
supporting the Library.
We could not do it
without you!**

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We will share our Flint Public Library Transformed donor list and our deepest thanks for their support in the next edition of Best Sellers!





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

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Grand Re-Opening Scheduled

A After more than five years of hard work, we are making plans to reopen the Library...and we are excited! It's amazing to realize how much work and community support have been needed to reach this milestone.

It took root. We sought community input during our strategic planning process in 2014. That input clearly identified the building improvements needed to serve the public well. The resulting Transformation Plan of 2015 gave birth to a renovation dream.

It took shape. In 2016, we received a generous grant from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation to assess our building, and in 2017 we selected OPN as our architect. That's when the dream started to take physical shape.

You took ownership. Our community's YES vote in 2019 on the bond proposal triggered investments by our lead donors. The people who own the Library took charge of its future and their own by investing in transformation.

And now you can take part. Over the last few months, our community has taken part in the fundraising to complete this renovation. Soon you will have a chance to take part in the grand re-opening of this community treasure.

We can't wait to welcome you to Flint Public Library Transformed! Please check our project website (YourNewFPL.org) or our Facebook page for more details as we get closer to April.

Sign up for e-mail updates at YourNewFPL.org or follow us on Facebook to receive all the latest news.

WINTER 2022

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