

friends

HELPING
LIBRARIES REACH
NEW HEIGHTS

Friends of the Library, Montgomery County • www.folmc.org

Your Membership Makes All the Difference



Nearly 40 years ago, Friends of the Library, Montgomery County (FOLMC) was formed by a group of citizens who wanted to make a good library system even better. They believed in the power of libraries.

The very mission of FOLMC revolves around the belief that a core group of passionate people can make a major impact, and it's because of Members like you that we have been able to support MCPL since 1982.

In what often feels like volatile, uncertain, and quickly changing times, your Membership has become more critical than ever in keeping our mission alive—and sustaining the library's future.

In this issue, we want to show you just how far your Membership goes, what programs and resources your Memberships fund, and the nuts and bolts behind each FOLMC Membership—including how to personalize your gifts so you can support the branches you visit most or support libraries county-wide.

Above all, we want to offer our thanks, to all of you, because it is only through your continued investment and support that we will be there for libraries, both today and tomorrow.

Your Membership Funds Critical Programs

In 2020, FOLMC spent 72 cents out of each dollar donated on funding programs and services. These programs helped libraries serve constituents of all ages and income levels, including:

- 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten
- Go! Kits, take-home education packs
- Just for the Record – a Vinyl Day Festival
- Library Lovers Month, an annual celebration of libraries
- Mosaic, a middle school creative writing program which celebrates diversity
- MCPL Staff development and training

- Fees for speakers and author events, like the Contemporary Conversations series
- System-wide programs, ranging from languages to education, health & wellness, culture, arts & crafts and music, to S.T.E.M., workforce & business development and financial literacy classes.

But your Membership does more than fund library programming. Members are also champions for our library system and ambassadors to our community. In fact, some of FOLMC's most important initiatives show our Members how to make their voices heard to advocate on behalf of MCPL.

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Amplifying Your Voice Through Advocacy

Our strength is in our numbers. As our Membership grows, we can show our elected officials that our library system has an army of supporters—and that is very powerful.

FOLMC engages in advocacy for MCPL in numerous ways, starting with Joint Advocacy Meetings, hosted in partnership with the Montgomery County Library Board, where the Director details the State of the Library and its strategic initiatives, and how to unify our advocacy efforts to serve its needs. Afterwards, volunteers provide an Advocacy Toolkit on practical steps to support or advance an adequate library budget that serves the county's needs.

Finally, at our joint Annual Advocacy Potluck, FOLMC Members have the opportunity to meet with County Council members to emphasize the importance of MCPL in our communities.

MCPL needs us to be those people in voice and action. Will you become a member and join us?

Your Membership Makes Up for Lost Revenue

Your Membership is more critical now than ever because it helps supplement funding sources that were lost due to COVID-19. Our organization's major funding streams, from our used bookstores and, for FOLMC Chapters, their booksales, were cut because the Branches closed. And while the Rockville Bookstore was able to reopen following County guidance in the summer of 2020, our Chapter Booksales and the Wheaton Bookstore could not reopen. Additionally, major large sources of revenue were lost, like our in-person booksale at Gaithersburg Book Festival—and the resulting financial losses have been staggering. While FOLMC was able to receive some emergency aid, we are looking to increase our Membership base to further offset those losses.

Support Specific Branches, or System-Wide

Ready to join or renew your Membership? Take a look at the enclosed envelope, because there are several ways you can support us.

First, select your Member Level (for more on Member Benefits, see below). Next, you will choose your chapter from the list provided, or you can support us System-Wide.

We get a lot of questions about the best way to support FOLMC, and we say the answer is always personal. For instance, if you live in Olney but you work in Rockville, and you visit several branches, this is a good reason to select the System-Wide option, so that your Membership supports multiple branches.

But if you live, work, and play in Damascus and want to make sure your Membership dollars support your community, then that's the branch you should support.

At the end of the day, it's all up to you. However you spend your membership dollars, MCPL benefits.

PLEASE CHOOSE ONE OPTION BELOW*

- System-wide COVID-19 Relief
- Give to my local chapter
(please circle ONE)

Aspen Hill	Little Falls
Chevy Chase	Marilyn J. Praisner
Connie Morella	Olney
Damascus	Potomac
Davis	Quince Orchard
Deaf Culture Digital	Rockville Memorial
Gaithersburg	Silver Spring
Germantown	Twinbrook
Kensington Park	White Oak

The Nuts and Bolts of Becoming a Member

Once you have selected where you want your Membership funds to go, you will see a section called Additional Donations. There you can donate an additional amount to support libraries. Once you submit the payment, FOLMC staff will send you a thank you confirmation and you will be added to our print and e-mailing lists as well as a reminder to follow us on social media for the most up-to-date news.

You Give, You Receive

Our Memberships are geared towards every budget, from individuals to families, educators, and corporate supporters.

All FOLMC Members receive a Membership Card or Certificate of Membership, Members-only news and information, and our printed "Friends" newsletter (Members do have the choice to "opt-out" of any of these communications).

At the \$50 Novel level and above, Members enjoy a 10% discount valid at our Bookstores, making this our most popular Membership level.

Memberships at the \$100 Bestseller level and above also receive MCPL's Calendar of Events (when available); higher levels of Membership enjoy free shipping on items purchased at our online stores, discounts to FOLMC events, exclusive Membership gifts, sales, priority access, and more.



FOLMC Provides MCPL with Instrumental Support While Buildings Were Closed

Anita Vassallo, MCPL Director

Exactly a week after closing our physical buildings to the public, MCPL held its first virtual program – a storytime. Through the generosity of FOLMC, we were able to purchase Zoom licenses to move all programs to a virtual platform. We are now streaming programs in many different categories for all ages and interests. Through virtual programming, we have been able to considerably expand the number of participants allowed per program and offer accessibility options such as closed captioning. There were 2,577 virtual programs offered from March 23, 2020 to February 28, 2021.

Through funds from FOLMC, MCPL virtually held our Summer Read & Learn program and annual comic convention, MoComCon, which were both very successful. We were able to provide exciting prizes for both programs.

Our partnership with FOLMC has allowed us to continue engaging renowned authors and speakers for the Contemporary Conversations@MCPL series. Conversations included Pride Month; Celebrating 100 years of Women's Right to Vote; and Dialogue with Haitian-American Writers Edwidge Danticat and Katia D. Ulysse. Recent plans include prize-winning journalist and nationally syndicated personal finance columnist Michelle

Singletary, and Haben Girma, a human rights lawyer and the first deaf and blind person to graduate from Harvard Law School.

The cooperation and funding received from FOLMC during the pandemic has been instrumental in being able to offer these programs and to continue providing many other services to the public during the closure of our buildings. Our provision of services, some of which can only occur in our buildings, is a critical part of the County's mission for its residents. Public libraries are important to the life of a community, and we look forward to planning a phased, controlled reopening of our library branches to the public.

There is no magic wand to bring library services back to "normal," post pandemic. It will require time and significant work. We are so appreciative of FOLMC's support over the years and look forward to continuing to work together to accomplish the mission and vision of Montgomery County Public Libraries and Montgomery County.



"Through virtual programming, MCPL has been able to considerably expand the number of participants allowed per program and offer accessibility options."

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Already a Member? What Else Can You Do?

There's plenty you can do if you're already a Member! You could pass the envelope in this newsletter to a friend or a neighbor and write a note on it saying how much FOLMC Membership means to you. After all, word of mouth is the best advertising.

Say a loved one has a birthday coming up, or if you'd like to memorialize someone who was a big library supporter... or give an outright gift to FOLMC to go the extra mile because we are going the extra mile for libraries—there's a way you can do that, too. Simply visit www.folmc.org and click on the Support tab for a list of options.

Many businesses offer Workplace Giving programs, where employers will match your charitable contributions, dollar for dollar. It's an easy way to double your impact! Your employer may ask you to fill out a separate form to fill out to set up your Workplace Giving program; you can simply enclose everything with your check or credit card information, and we will take care of the rest.

We thank you for all of your support!





Congratulations to our 2020-2021 Winners and Honorable Mentions



6th Grade Winners

Nishka Soni, Essay, Lakelands Park Middle
Alana Applebaum*, Poem, Thomas Pyle Middle
Annabel Taylor, Short Story, Thomas Pyle Middle

7th Grade Winners

Aleks Rann, Essay, Westland Middle School
Abigail Cho, Poem, Hallie Wells Middle
Maia Petrov, Short Story, John Poole Middle

8th Grade Winners

Sanya Bharti, Essay, Herbert Hoover Middle
Florence Halbgewachs, Poem, John Poole Middle
Kaleab Ayele, Short Story, Forest Oak Middle

6th Grade Honorable Mentions

Elizabeth Chung, Essay, Herbert Hoover Middle
Jocelyn Nolasco Fernandez, Essay, Col. E. Brooke Lee Middle
Nia George, Poem, Takoma Park Middle
Kaya Herr, Poem, John Poole Middle School
Desiderio Trabucco, Short Story, Ridgeview Middle
Syeda Gilani, Short Story, Parkland Middle

7th Grade Honorable Mentions

Belen Hailu, Poem, Sligo Middle
Mary Belay, Poem, Francis Scott Key Middle
Belinda Adu, Short Story, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Middle
Emily Ponciano, Short Story, John Poole Middle

8th Grade Honorable Mention

Tharaa Izuagie, Poem, Francis Scott Key Middle

*Best in Show

FOLMC congratulates our 2020-2021 Mosaic Winners and Honorable Mentions! As an annual language arts program for middle school students, Mosaic allows Montgomery County Public Schools' (MCPS) students to creatively express their personal reflections on diversity and culture.

The program includes a virtual discussion and Q&A with a noteworthy author, who also writes the forward to the Mosaic Anthology. This year's author was Andrew Aydin.

An Atlanta native, Aydin was raised by a single mother and grew up reading everything, particularly comic books. After college, Aydin took a job with the late Congressman John Lewis in Washington, D.C. A year later, while serving as Press Secretary on the Congressman's re-election campaign, Aydin had the idea that Congressman Lewis should write a comic book to tell the story of his involvement in the Civil Rights Movement.

Though it took a little convincing, Congressman Lewis eventually agreed on the condition that Aydin write it with him. Aydin became the driving force behind *MARCH*, which in 2016 became the first comics work to ever win the National Book Award and reached #1 on the *New York Times* bestseller list. Aydin is a Robert F. Kennedy Book Award Honoree, a Printz Award winner, a Sibert Medal winner, a Walter Dean Myers Award winner, a Carter G. Woodson Book Award winner, a two-time Eisner award winner, and the recipient of multiple Coretta Scott King honors.

Order a copy of the 2020-2021 Mosaic Anthology by visiting www.amazon.com/gp/product/B096LPT1TQ.

Our 7th Annual Library After Dark Virtual Gala Raised \$42,000!



Thanks to YOU

It is important for nonprofit organizations to host annual fundraising galas—yes, even in a pandemic—because it's how we can showcase to our donors the critical impact their support has made. In fact, the very act of coming together is meaningful, as we take a moment to celebrate the cause that connects us all—MCPL.

While COVID-19 restrictions once again prevented us from gathering in person, our 2021 Virtual Gala was an even bigger success than in 2020, and we are truly grateful for your response.

It was a lively evening hosted by NBC4's Julianna Valencia featuring a popular mixology session from Deputy Director Lysette House and silent & live auctions with the indefatigable Sherry Truhlar. Thanks to your sponsorships and donations, the event raised over \$42,000!

Many of you have already contributed, and for that we are grateful. It's not too late to give if you have not already. We hope you will consider a gift to FOLMC so we can continue to support MCPL.

Despite the many challenges we've faced in the past year, FOLMC has funded online programming, digital library resources, and equipment needed to increase access to libraries. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us just how instrumental libraries are to our community, and as we begin our collective recovery, libraries will continue to play an important role in bringing us all back together.

Simply visit www.folmc.org/donate to give today. We thank you, now and always, for your support.

A Word From FOLMC's New Board President

Pam Saussy



Greetings, my fellow Friends of the Library, Montgomery County members! I'm Pam Saussy, newly elected President of the Board of Trustees. It's a privilege to lead the Board during such a pivotal time—this past year has placed unprecedented demands on our public libraries and on FOLMC itself to invent new ways to serve patrons safely. As President, my goals are to ensure that the Board represents the diversity of the county's library constituents and provide skilled and thoughtful oversight of FOLMC for long-term organizational sustainability. I hope to have the opportunity to meet you, virtually or in-person, in the months to come.

I first became a library lover as a military child. I've travelled for most of my life and have found books to be more than just a comfort; they've been an inspiration, a trusted companion, and sometimes even a lifeline. I believe that libraries are our County's most valuable resource, and that's why now is a more important time than ever to support them.

If you're already a Member of FOLMC, I send you my gratitude. Your Membership is vital as we work to support our public libraries with funding for programs and resources that might not otherwise be possible. But your role as library stewards doesn't end there: We also need your voice when we advocate for library funding and to keep Montgomery County's award-winning public libraries a top priority for our County leaders. For more on how to do that, turn to page 2.

Please enjoy this issue of "Friends" and stay in touch!



Reopening Day



We are accepting donations. Please drop-off during business hours.



A BOOK TO LOVE AT FRIENDS' BOOKSTORES

ROCKVILLE BOOKSTORE

Open for shopping and donations

Randolph Hills Shopping Center
4886 Boiling Brook Parkway
(301) 984-3300

WHEATON BOOKSTORE

Check our website for re-opening information:

folmc.org/bookstores

Wheaton Library and Community
Recreation Center
11701 Georgia Avenue
(301) 933-1110

Get social with all the latest FOLMC and bookstore news.

[Facebook.com/FOLMC](https://www.facebook.com/FOLMC)

[@FOLMC](https://twitter.com/FOLMC)

[@folmcmd](https://www.instagram.com/folmcmd)

[Friends of the Library, Montgomery County](https://www.linkedin.com/company/friends-of-the-library-montgomery-county)

This newsletter was sent to print on June 9, 2021.

For our latest free online events and most up-to-date information, visit our website, www.folmc.org.

DESIGNATE FOLMC IN YOUR WORKPLACE GIVING



CFC Designation
Code 42387



United Way NCA
Designation Code 8728



Maryland Charity Campaign
Designation Code 521283371

Note from Executive Director Ari Z. Brooks

A Time for Unity

Like the rest of our nation, I was captivated by Inaugural Poet Amanda Gorman. Just 22 years young. How could she be so wise?

Throughout these long, unsettling pandemic months, I have taken much inspiration from young professionals. Our Deputy Director, Lysette House, and Director of Business Operations, Lance Salins, have helped me see the light with their ability to generate new ideas.

When our doors were closed in the spring of 2020, they developed the idea of a mail-order book program. Aware that people were concerned about handling books even as we reopened our Rockville Bookstore, Lysette proposed the new concept of joining Bookshop.org—and selling new books online.

A used bookstore selling new books? What a concept!

We really relied on each other's strengths – *would anyone come to a virtual record festival? We wondered. Would anyone come to a Virtual Gala? We forged ahead. They were big successes.*

Ever the optimist, Lance would say, "Ari, now that our bookstore has reopened, I am strategizing on how to reconnect with our customers."

I saw the light in my kids, as well.

My youngest daughter continued to put her clothes out every

"The new dawn balloons as we free it. For there is always light, if only we're brave enough to see it. If only we're brave enough to be it."

-Amanda Gorman, *The Hill We Climb*

night despite the fact that her commute entailed traveling from her bed to her desk.

My eldest daughter ran 100 miles in one month. She continues to push herself, setting—and meeting—goals each day.

And so for me, I had to keep up with that, and be the force to move everything forward—I couldn't fall apart. In the same way, I vowed to see FOLMC's way out of this dark time, so it could continue to provide meaningful support to the library.

Of course, in normal times you have to have a strong team to be productive. But the only way I feel like we got through the scariest times is because our team was strong in the first place. And we continued to strengthen those bonds and ties along the way. We leaned on each other.

Now, more than ever, is a time for all of us to take a page from Amanda Gorman and all the young people who inspire us. Physically we couldn't be together, but the last thing we want right now is to be divided as we are. This is a time to come together. Because we're all in this together. We need that mindset to build on each other's strength to pull ourselves up and pull each other out.

We are in a position to rebuild the bridge of connectiveness—if, in the words of Amanda Gorman, *only we dare*.