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Wishing Anita Vassallo the Best in Her Next Chapter

From the desk of Ari Z. Brooks, Executive Director, FOLMC

HAPPY
Retirement!

We congratulate our friend, MCPL Library Director Anita Vassallo, as she closes one big chapter in her life—and begins another.



In June, Vassallo will retire from her 55-year career in the MCPL system, which began simply with a love of books. As a child, she spent a great deal of time at the Four Corners Library in Woodmoor and got her first job there as a teenager, shelving books. After Vassallo received her master's in library science from the University of Maryland, she became a Children's Librarian at the Kensington Park Library. She also worked at three other branches, before becoming Library Manager at Davis Library, and held a position in MCPL's technology and website management division, experience that she would use as Library Director to help MCPL keep pace with changing times. For instance, MCPL now offers video streaming services and online classes, and many of the branches have undergone refresh projects that upgraded their technology.

We are particularly grateful for Vassallo's role in establishing a Teen Librarian in all MCPL branches. I remember how groundbreaking it was when MCPL hired its first Young Adult librarian back in early 2000s. The importance of Teen Librarians cannot be overstated, as they connect teens with library resources during a critical time in their lives—and serve as a significant adult for many young people. Through Vassallo's leadership, teens are now a critical population for MCPL core services, and a dedicated Teen Services Manager, librarian Tyler Chadwell-English, oversees all teen programming. Helping teens get ready for college and the workforce, as well as become lifelong users of the library are a big part of MCPL's strategic priorities.

FOLMC exists to meet the needs of MCPL; we are here to serve them. We are proud of the work we have done to support teens, from launching the Mosaic Creative Writing Program as a way for middle schoolers to showcase their creative writing talents and re-unite them with library resources to outfitting the first "teen space" in the Wheaton Library through signage and ergonomic furniture. Every MCPL branch now has a dedicated teen space at certain hours of the day, usually after school. FOLMC is grateful to the contributions of our high school Student Representatives on the Board of Trustees for helping FOLMC determine the programs and enhancements that best serve the teen population in Montgomery County. FOLMC also provides funding for MCPL's Teen Advisory Boards so they can enjoy pizza while they conduct business, and we're especially proud of the "Keep Calm & Go to the Library" panel discussion on mental health resources we collaborated together on in 2022 which featured national teen mental health advocates.

Vassallo may be retiring, but these innovations will have an everlasting impact. We thank her for her decades of service and wish her the very best on her next adventure.

FOLMC Funded Activities

Below are highlights of the programs FOLMC funded in the last six months through speaker fees, supplies, and equipment. To see a complete list, please check out our calendar at www.folmc.org. Thank you to our donors and volunteers for their dedication to our mission.

Aspen Hill

- Music Everywhere with Teresa Jimenez
- Washington Metropolitan Gamer Symphony Orchestra
- Odyssey Hand Dance

Brigadier General Charles E. McGee Library

- Celebrate 2024: Fun with Fluorescence!
- Write to Right
- Dazzling Tiaras: Costumes, History & Fantasy!

Chevy Chase

- Rock & Read with Tony M. Music
- Kaydee Puppets Show
- Kitchen Chemistry with Science Connections

Connie Morella

- Sensory Superpowers with Dr. Jaya Viswanathan
- No Shelf Control book club supplies & refreshments
- Madison Chinese Dance Academy Lunar New Year Festival Performance

Damascus

- History Alive! Women's History Month Performance
- Separate but UNEqual: the History of School Segregation in Montgomery County with Ralph Buglass of Montgomery History
- Joy & Social Connection Through Group Synchronous Activity with Danceintime

Davis

- Science Saturday - Playing with Polymers with Science Connections
- African Folk Tales
- Paint a birdhouse!

Gaithersburg

- Beginner's Yoga with Archana Gupta of Yoga Fusion Wellness
- Adults Only: Craft, Coffee, and Chill
- African Folk Tales with Bright Star Children's Theatre

Germantown

- Li-Ming Chinese Academy Lunar New Year Performance
- Youth Yoga Class with ShalOmaste Kids Yoga
- Cantaré Latin American Music Bilingual Musical Performance

Kensington Park

- Crafts at the Library: Solar Eclipse & Space supplies
- Spring Storywalk books in the Literary Garden
- Picture Book Room toys

Little Falls

- Storytime puppets
- Children's Headphones (for use at computers)
- Literary Salon with Karen Arnold

Long Branch

- A Musical Performance with Bliss the Electric Blue Violinist
- Music & More! with Karen Stroup
- Hopping Origami Frogs! Supplies

Maggie Nightingale

- Dollhouse refurbishment supplies
- Poolesville Elementary Art Show Opening supplies
- Animals Around the World with Echoes of Nature

Marilyn J. Praisner

- Spring Take & Make supplies
- Oral Care Kits for A Wider Circle, a Teen Advisory Board Community Service Project
- African Folk Tales with Bright Star Children's Theatre

Noyes

- Spring Take & Make supplies
- Superb Saturday STEM supplies
- Winter Take & Make supplies

Olney

- Music & Movement with Ms. Stef
- American Sign Language Storytime with Aaron Loggins
- Anansi and the Magic Rock: A Trickster Tale with Dramatic Play

Potomac

- Crafternoon
- Hindi Fun & Learn
- My First Art Class

Quince Orchard

- Griot Storyteller: Renee Emanuel
- Echoes through the Stacks Poetry Anthology release & reading
- Mahjong at the Library supplies

Rockville Memorial

- Let's DIY: Easy Jute Rope Tray supplies
- Cricut machine & accessories for programming (for staff use)
- Solar Eclipse Celebration supplies

Twinbrook

- Kaydee Puppets Show
- Celebrate Native American Traditional Dance with Baltimore American Indian Center
- Rock & Rhyme with Mr. Jon & Friends

Wheaton

- Blue Sky Puppet Theatre Presents "Rufus The Rednosed Raindog"
- Book display for children's area
- How to Make Videos that Inspire and Engage! with James June Schneider

White Oak

- Drum Circle with Katy Gaughan
- Abracadabra Alex Magic Performance
- Alma Thomas Children's Art Studio led by Michael Hilliard

Check Out Just for the Record, a Vinyl Day this August!



Mark your calendars for **Just for the Record, a Vinyl Day** this summer! One of FOLMC's most eagerly anticipated events takes place **August 10** at Brigadier General Charles E. McGee Library (Silver Spring). Vinyl Record Day is a great way to celebrate music, build community, and learn more about the many musical resources MCPL offers.

Come for all or part of the day and enjoy songwriting workshops, panel discussions, Storytimes, DJ scratch battles, makerspace activities, and more—and best of all, it's free!

FOLMC Bookstore staff will also be on hand with crates of vinyl for you to purchase as well as a curated selection of music-related books.

We thank our partners, MCPL and Levine Music for their creativity and coordination in making Just for the Record, a Vinyl Day possible.

A Note from MCPL Director Anita Vassallo



We are so excited to continue MCPL's greener, community-driven Summer Reading Challenge (SRC). This model was proposed by our former Early Literacy and Children's Programming Manager Cassandra Malik to align with the county's Climate Action Plan, which emphasizes lessening our footprint through the reduction of waste. Implemented in 2022, MCPL's redesigned summer reading program encouraged young residents to give back to the community while reading, learning, playing and socializing. Participants were no longer awarded with small, non-biodegradable plastic prizes, but with the satisfaction and pride of having made a significant improvement in the community.

This summer's "Adventure Starts Here" challenge spotlights local historic sites and recreation areas, as we again partner with Montgomery Parks Foundation. The Foundation will use the generous donations from FOLMC for three new objectives; by reading and completing activities, children and teens will be helping to conserve, beautify, and expand accessibility in parks throughout Montgomery County.

Summer Reading Challenge 2024 kick-off will also be throughout the county with six exciting regional events:

- White Oak Library, 11701 New Hampshire Ave., Silver Spring, June 15, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
- Gaithersburg Library, 18330 Montgomery Village Ave., Gaithersburg, June 15, 2-3 p.m.
- Damascus Library, 9701 Main St., Damascus, June 22, 11:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
- Connie Morella Library, 7400 Arlington Rd., Bethesda, June 23, 2-4 p.m.
- Kensington Park Library, 4201 Knowles Ave., Kensington, June 28, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
- Aspen Hill Library, 4407 Aspen Hill, Rd., Rockville, June 29 from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Over the past few years, we have seen a significant increase in numbers of SRC participants - nearly 13,000 in 2022 and over 14,000 in 2023. Our greener, community-driven model has gained local and national attention. The success of our summer reading program is largely due to the support of FOLMC, for which we are extremely grateful. Working together, we look forward to even more participants this year who will positively impact our community through reading.



Congratulations, Mosaic Winners!

Mosaic is an annual language arts program for middle school students to showcase their creative talents and express their cultural identities. Winners and Honorable Mentions are published in the FOLMC Mosaic Anthology, which you can order by visiting www.folmc.org.

Join us in congratulating our 2023-2024 Mosaic Winners and Honorable Mentions!

6th Grade Winners

Mithran Karthic, *Essay*, Julius West
Lawrence Liao, *Poem*, Eastern*
Florence Ou, *Short Story*, Eastern

7th Grade Winners

Juno Seigel, *Essay*, Eastern
Jitu Abebe, *Poem*, Silver Creek
Sofia Ou, *Short Story*, Eastern

8th Grade Winners

Hridaan Popuri, *Essay*, Thomas W. Pyle
Lila Briskin-Watson, *Poem*, Silver Creek
Jenny Ryu, *Short Story*, Herbert Hoover

6th Grade Honorable Mentions

Khanh Pham, *Essay*, Herbert Hoover
Ella Zimmerman, *Essay*, Julius West
Kristian Carpenter, *Essay*, Eastern
Reya Ganesh, *Essay*, Hallie Wells
Madeleine Lee, *Poem*, Thomas W. Pyle
Aria Roy, *Poem*, Francis Scott Key
Dilshan Prakash, *Short Story*, Hallie Wells

7th Grade Honorable Mentions

Sufyana Johnson, *Essay*, Westland
Asha Smith, *Poem*, Herbert Hoover
Arya Das, *Poem*, Silver Creek
Melanie Ouyang, *Short Story*, Hallie Wells

8th Grade Honorable Mentions

Lucie Vidh, *Essay*, Cabin John
Luna Hernandez, *Poem*, Forest Oak
Sophie Levine, *Poem*, Thomas W. Pyle

*Best in Show



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10AM-6PM**



at
the



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