

## OFF THE SHELF

A LOOK INSIDE BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY



BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY IS THE FIFTH-LARGEST PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES, SERVING THE BOROUGH'S 2.5 MILLION RESIDENTS AND OFFERING THOUSANDS OF PUBLIC PROGRAMS, MILLIONS OF BOOKS, FREE WIFI AND MORE THAN 1,100 INTERNET-ACCESSIBLE COMPUTERS.

## THE TECHNOLOGY ISSUE

**PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT** TODAY'S TEENS, **TOMORROW'S TECHIES** 

**BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS** WHAT TO READ ON THE GO

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**FEATURE STORY** 

**PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT** 

world-class collections and wide-ranging programs at Central Library.

Celebrating 75 years of

**HAPPENINGS** 

**ARTS & CULTURE** 

**AUTHOR TALKS & EXHIBITIONS** 

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



IT'S BEEN 20 YEARS SINCE THE CARD CATALOGS WERE REMOVED FROM THE LOBBY OF CENTRAL LIBRARY,

supplanted by a computerized system that augured the end of an era. A new millennium approached, and revolution was in the air.

Bill Gates personally delivered a dozen internet-ready computers to Brooklyn Public Library, as Microsoft's \$2.2 million "Libraries Online" grant inspired the city to invest millions more for World Wide Web access in all 60 of our branches. "Indeed," Mayor Giuliani announced, "the city recognizes the potential power of the internet." Mr. Gates predicted that "libraries will play a pivotal role as we enter the 21st century in providing access to knowledge and opportunities for everyone."

And so we have. Far from diminishing their role in society, the digital age has made libraries more essential than ever to the communities they serve. The benefits of technological progress have not been shared equally by all New Yorkers, and libraries, for more than a century the city's most democratic institutions, have embraced their role as equalizers.

Last year alone, Brooklyn Public Library hosted more than 4,300 free technology classes and workshops. We are the borough's largest provider of free wireless internet access, and our 60 branches boast more than 1,100 computers for public use. Every BPL branch is home to at least one technology resource specialist who provides hands-on, personalized assistance to patrons.

Mr. Gates noted in 1996 that the book and the screen could and would co-exist. As of this writing, Brooklyn Public Library's catalog holds 3.9 million materials, the vast majority in print. In fact, with the city's increased investment in libraries in this year's budget, we plan to acquire even more materials, both print and digital.

The years ahead promise breakthroughs beyond the contemporary bounds of our imagination. New technologies and means of communication will continue to emerge at an astonishing pace. Whatever the future brings, BPL will be there to help our patrons find their way—and I am confident that 20 years from now, as we look back fondly on the antiquated tools that amaze us today, the Library will remain a point of departure for Brooklynites who wish to engage more deeply with the world around them.

Very truly,

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# CULTIVATING ORRON

## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

The focus in classrooms across the country is science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) programming, and BPL is doing its part to support students. For more than a decade, the Library's T4 program has helped high school students develop the technological and professional skills they'll need to get ahead in their careers.

Today's Teens, Tomorrow's Techies was launched in 2004 to provide high school students with access to computers and cutting-edge technologies. Approximately 100 Brooklyn high school students are selected each year for an eight-day summer training session in which they develop valuable customer service skills and complete intensive coursework in Microsoft Office, Adobe Creative Suite and other programs.

After training, each T4 student devotes more than 100 volunteer hours to helping patrons utilize Library technology.

Program director Jackson Gomes stresses that T4 participants don't just receive free training and workshops—the students are mentored by tech professionals who teach them how to prepare and market themselves for college and the workplace. The T4 program also hosts field trips that allow participants to experience the tech sector in person.







T4 VOLUNTEERS IN THE TEEN TECH LOFT

"Our graduates go on to great opportunities in college," says Gomes, who has led the program for five years. "And many continue to have a relationship with BPL, either by running a program or computer class, or by motivating their peers to explore STEM opportunities."

As they volunteer, the students continue to develop marketable skills, such as teaching experience, Java programming, coding, animation and more.

Gomes is encouraged to note an increase in T4 applications from young women. "Initially a lot of the girls signed up solely for the volunteer opportunity," he says, "but lately, girls apply to the program with the goal of becoming engineers."

A psychology major in college, Gomes grew up in BPL libraries and admits a fascination with how things work—from human brains to advanced machinery. "I enjoy teaching myself technology; it means I'll never stop learning."

Gomes believes that the Library must continue to make technology accessible to all. "We are the bridge; we are the doors," he says. "When I walk into the Information Commons at Central Library on a Saturday, or visit Sunset Park Library on a weekday, I know our young patrons are going to walk away having learned something, for free. The fact that the Library has so much to offer any teen who's thirsty for knowledge—that's a big deal."

Equally important to Gomes is making sure that each branch has access to the tools and technology the community needs.

A lot of people use the public library as a resource, something they need to be available and accessible. Where it can't be, technology bridges that gap.

T4 teens learn to work with and give back to the community. They are among the Library's youngest and most enthusiastic ambassadors. As Gomes puts it: "Once you hook a teen into the Library for the right reasons, you have them for life! They'll come back and tell their friends."

For more information on the T4 program, visit us at **bklynlibrary.org/support/** volunteer/t4





BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY May 7

2016

## THE BEST EXCUSE FOR AN ALL-DAY BIKE RIDE

Ou<mark>r an</mark>nual bike extravaganza is a fun way to support the Library's 60 neighborhood branches. Cruise to as many branches as you can from 10 am - 5 pm to qualify for prizes.

## TOUR THE BOROUGH ON TWO WHEELS

This year's bike routes include a Brooklyn Waterfront Tour, Brownstone Brooklyn Tour and the Dora the Explorer Family-Friendly Tour Around Prospect Park.

## **CELEBRATE A JOB WELL DONE**

The Bike the Branches Block Party, 3-7 pm at Central Library, features live music, food vendors, drinks and activities for all ages.







Bloomberg Philanthropies





















Take what's great about traditional bowling (friendly competition, a fun group activity, those sweet moves), subtract the not-so-great (smelly bowling shoes, heat lamp nachos, the always-jamming ball return), and what do you get? Library Lanes!

Launched at Central Library and Macon Library just a yearand-a-half ago, BPL's virtual bowling league has become one of the Library's fastest-growing social programs. Since expanding to eleven branches throughout the borough, bowlers are preparing for an East Brooklyn versus West Brooklyn competition in the spring.

Library Lanes is managed by BPL's Services for Older Adults team and is geared toward the over-50 crowd. The league brings together senior citizens with a piece of equipment that's probably more familiar to their grandkids: the Microsoft XBox One. The video game system is easy to use—no prior experience necessary—and allows teammates to practice against each other or take on an opposing team from another library. "It's an amazing way for older adults to form friendships, get exercise and gain familiarity with gaming technology," according to Taina Evans, BPL's coordinator of services for older adults.

Games are held every Thursday morning, with monthly tournaments to determine branch bragging rights. Thus far, Team Macon has dominated the competition.



Interested in giving virtual bowling a whirl, but don't quite qualify as an older adult? Fear not: Library Lanes is open to everyone. "Different age groups peek into the Info Commons Lab at Central and it becomes naturally intergenerational," says BPL Director of Outreach Services Nick Higgins. Just don't expect your comparative youth to be an advantage. "Teens get beaten by 80-year-olds all the time. The seniors are competitive; they come to play."

To find out more about Library Lanes and BPL's many other programs for older adults, visit www.bklynlibrary.org/seniors.

## ARTS & CULTURE AT CENTRAL LIBRARY

Brooklyn Public Library hosts cultural events throughout the borough, including special series and programming at Central Library's Dr. S. Stevan Dweck Cultural Center. Join us to ignite your curiosity and immerse yourself in art and ideas.

**SPRING SERIES SPOTLIGHT** 

## AUTHOR TALKS

Cokie Roberts: DC Women During the Civil War  $Wednesday, April\ 20$ 

Gotham: New York City's Best Writers: Rob Spillman Saturday, May 7

Geoff Dyer Thursday, May 12

Patrice Nganang & Mukoma wa Ngugi Thursday, May 19

Yaa Gyassi with Tracy K. Smith Monday, June 13





## **EXHIBITIONS**

CELEBRATING AGWE: PAYING HOMAGE TO THE VODOU GOD OF WATER IN BROOKLYN BY GARRY PIERRE-PIERRE

Pulitzer Prize-winning multi-media and entrepreneurial journalist Garry Pierre-Pierre exhibits 20 hauntingly beautiful photographs of Haitian immigrants practicing their religion in Brooklyn. The images are a peek into an African religion that remains a source of mystery and misunderstanding to many.

Grand Lobby, May 1 – 31

THE 30TH ANNUAL EZRA JACK KEATS / NYC **DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION BOOKMAKING** COMPETITION

Youth Wing, May 1 – 20

UNTITLED, FEATURING AND CURATED BY PAT CUMMINGS

An exhibition curated by award-winning children's book author and illustrator Pat Cummings, featuring her original artwork and illustrations by artists she has mentored, many of whom are the creators of successful and well-known children's books.

Foyer Cases, April 14 – June 5

APRIL IS THE CRUELEST MONTH BY ILISA KATZ RISSMAN

April was the month Rissman's mother passed away. This ongoing project is the photographer's attempt to connect with her mother and explore her own feelings of abandonment and yearning through images that examine her identity and document her past.

Lobby Gallery, April 14 – June 5

## **PLUS**

- > Another round of creative talks with Dialogues in the Visual Arts (April 20 & May 25)
- > Randy Weston celebrates his 90th birthday with programs at the Dweck (April 26 & 30)
- > Pinkalicious returns to BPL in a production based on the popular book by Victoria Kann (April 9)

Visit the online calendar for full details and more. **Hours:** M – Th 9 – 9 | F 9 – 6 | Sa 9 – 6 | Su 1 – 5

Photo: Garry Pierre-Pierre



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started Decades Ago, Library Opens Today

Boro President Cashmore Says at Ceremony Will Be No 1 Institution of Kind by 1951,

Madoo and Al- back as 1899, the new Brooklyn Central Library at Orand ought for three Army Plaza officially opens to the public today following a Climaxing plans which first took definite form as far battle ever brief ceremony yesterday during which Borough President \*Cathmore envisioned the institution

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## WHAT TO READ ON THE GO





## **BOOKMATCH LIBRARIAN SPOTLIGHT**

### KATYA SCHAPIRO

CHILDREN'S LIBRARIAN / BAY RIDGE LIBRARY

Visit Bklyn BookMatch online

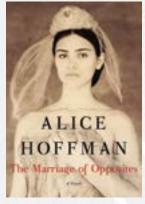
(bklynlibrary.org/bookmatch) and complete a reader profile to get your personalized book suggestions today!

Nothing's worse than being stuck without a book-but with BPL's extensive collection of downloadable eBooks, audiobooks and online resources, you'll never have to face that bleak fate again. Even if you love print, give BPL's digital catalog a try, and say goodbye to lugging Tolstoy and Trollope all over the city. (Or, indulge your guiltier literary pleasures; with digital books, no one needs to know!)

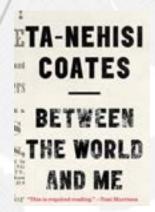
Hauling cookbooks to the store is no fun, but shopping without inspiration or a list can be expensive. Ebooks give you the best of both worlds. Carry popular, common-sense cookbooks on your handheld device and you'll always know what to pick up for dinner!

Never find yourself without a book again, no matter how many flights are delayed or how small your suitcase is. Take BPL with you wherever you go.

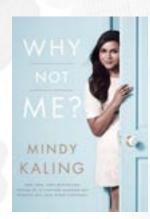
Check out the selections to the right and find the full list of recommendations at bklynlib.org/bookmatch



The Marriage of Opposites: A Novel Based on the Life of Rachel Pizzarro by Alice Hoffman



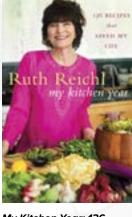
Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates



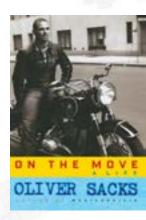
Why Not Me? by Mindy Kaling



Good and Cheap: Eat Well by Leanne Brown



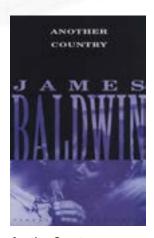
My Kitchen Year: 136 Recipes That Saved My Life by Ruth Reichl



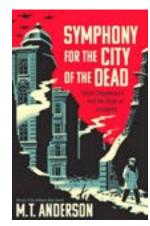
On the Move: A Memoir by Oliver Sacks



The Golden Compass by Philip Pullman



Another Country by James Baldwin



Symphony for the City of the Dead: Dmitri Shostakovich and the Siege of Leningrad by M. T. Anderson



Here's an obvious statement: The library is a place where families can read books together. Here's a less obvious one: Thanks to technology, families separated due to incarceration can use Brooklyn Public Library to read books together.

While family reading time is fun, it's also incredibly important. Not only is story time crucial to the development of a child's literacy skills and love of reading, it is essential to strengthening the parent-child bond. It is a time to focus, to wind down, a time for asking questions and laughing at silly rhymes and making connections between the words and illustrations on the page.

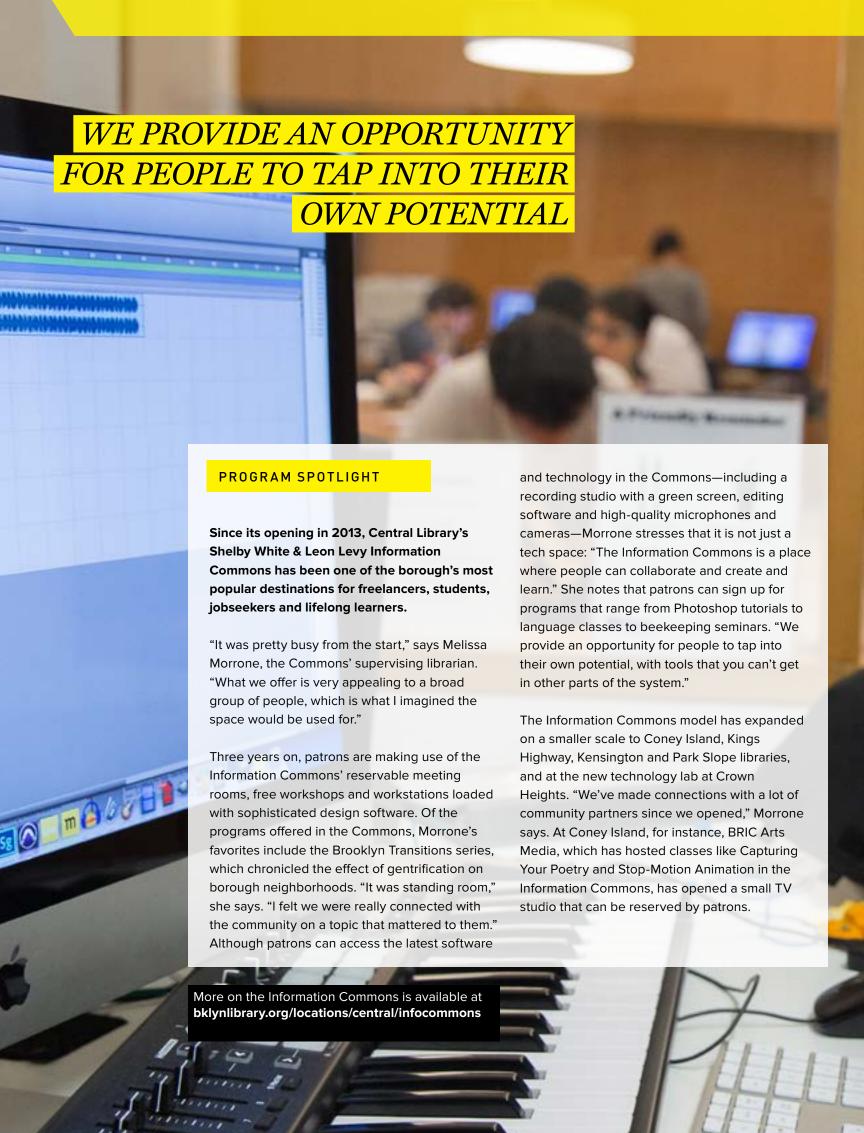
Sadly, the children of incarcerated parents often miss out on this critically important bonding experience. That's where Brooklyn Public Library makes the connection. TeleStory, a free BPL program offered in partnership with NYC's Department of Corrections, utilizes video conferencing technology to connect incarcerated parents with their children through books and family activities.

The forerunner of TeleStory, Daddy/Mommy & Me, teaches early literacy skills such as reading, writing, vocabulary and rhyming to small groups of imprisoned parents. The participants record readings of a favorite book that are then presented to their children.

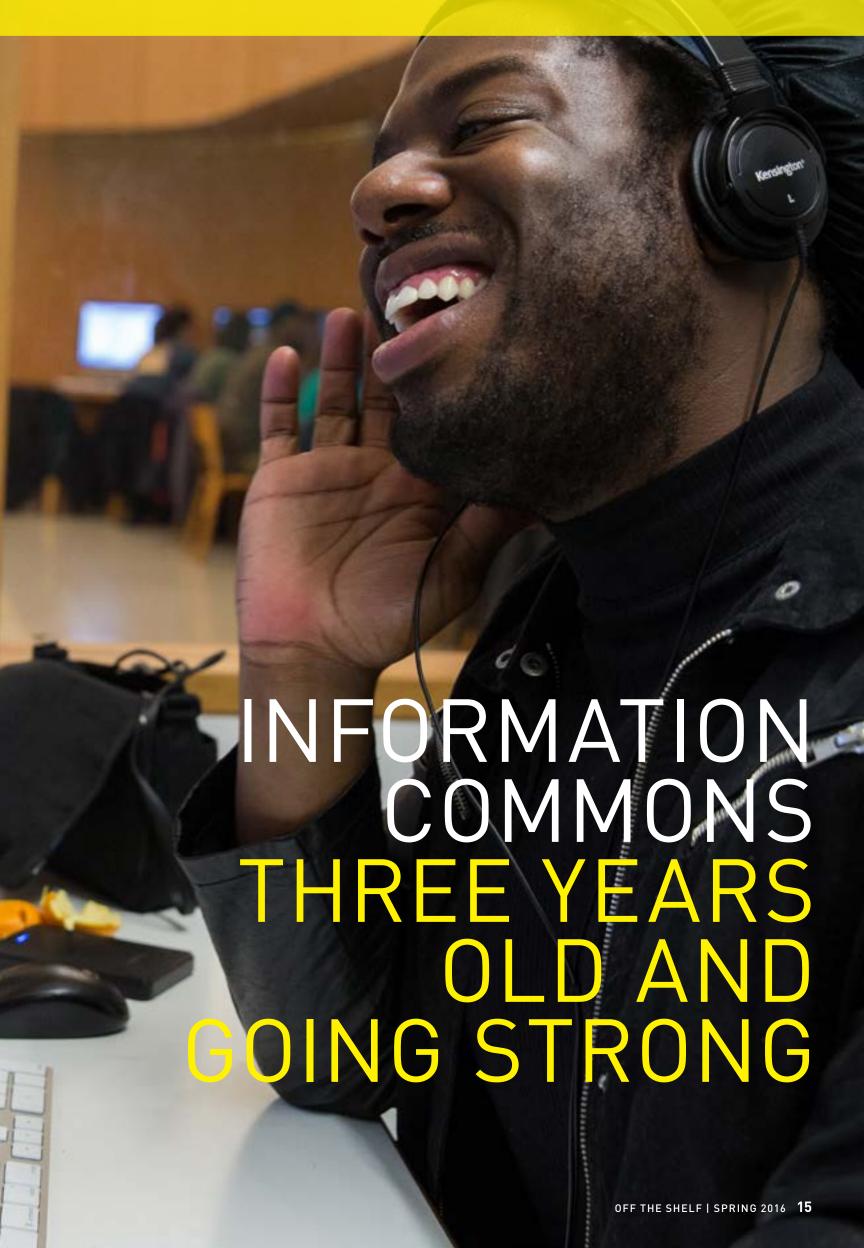
TeleStory takes the concept of Daddy/Mommy & Me a step further: instead of a parent recording a story for his or her child to listen to, families read aloud to each other over a live video feed. Matching book collections are set up at both the jail and the library, and a reserved room at Central Library's Information Commons Lab is equipped with toys and books to create a comforting environment.

Unlike family visits to correctional facilities, which can be stressful and emotionally exhausting for everyone involved, TeleStory nurtures the parent-child relationship by keeping participants focused on reading stories and singing songs. The program's ultimate goal is to connect families through reading in a friendly, neutral space—and so far, it's been a great success. The first TeleStory connection was made in March 2014, and BPL is preparing to expand the program to New Lots, Macon and New Utrecht libraries. Library staff members are brainstorming other innovative uses for the technology, such as classes for homebound seniors and legal consultations for immigrants.

To learn more about TeleStory and other outreach programs, visit bklynlib.org/prison-libraries.



OFF THE SHELF | SPRING 2016





## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

INTRODUCING JESSE MONTERO, BPL'S DIRECTOR

OF CENTRAL LIBRARY It's only fitting that the tech
issue of Off the Shelf feature Jesse Montero, a staff
member who has long championed innovative technology
at Brooklyn Public Library. Recently promoted to director
of Central Library, Jesse talked to us about how he got his
start at BPL, Central's 75th birthday and what he hopes to
accomplish in his new role.

Jesse's experiences as a patron inspired him to become a librarian himself. "I was using the library a lot as a researcher and came to enjoy being in libraries and working with librarians. I thought I could make an interesting career out of it."

Nearly a decade later, it's safe to say he succeeded.

A major project Jesse worked on is now one of the
Library's biggest draws: The Shelby White & Leon Levy
Information Commons. Jesse was responsible for planning
the public service model for this hybrid technology lab/
meeting area/co-working space and developing the
policies that govern its usage. He and his colleagues
crafted the partnerships that continue to attract classes
and workshops to the Commons.

After the launch of the Info Commons, Jesse helped train clerical workers to become technology resource specialists, staff members who troubleshoot issues and provide technical assistance and training to library visitors. "I admire how responsive the Library is to our patrons' needs. Technology has made libraries relevant in new ways," Jesse says. "WiFi in libraries transformed us into an office and co-working space. Not everyone has access to computers or broadband, so it's important that we provide access to digital technologies and services."

As director of Central, Jesse looks forward to creating new partnerships and services that meet the needs of BPL's patrons. One of his first duties, however, was to look to the past—February 2016 marked the 75th anniversary of Central Library's opening.

"It's really exciting to become the Central Library director during its 75th birthday. This library is a Brooklyn icon, and it's changed so much with the borough itself. I'm happy to be leading it through more changes: later this year, the Business & Career Library will be relocated to Central and we'll be able to provide more services to entrepreneurs and jobseekers."

When Jesse's not at work, he spends time with his family—and these worlds often intersect. "I've got two young boys who keep me busy, but luckily they love coming to the library."

## BPL DONOR MAKES TECHNOLOGY MORE ACCESSIBLE IN CROWN HEIGHTS

**MEET JAY LEWIS:** Erasmus Hall High School alumnus and BPL donor.

Brooklyn native Jay Lewis recently donated laptops for a learning lab at Crown Heights Library to help meet the evolving needs of his old neighborhood. "The purpose of the Library has changed from when I was a kid," Lewis says. "It has broadened its scope as a learning and safety center."

Lewis makes it a point to support non-profits that help children from economically-distressed neighborhoods. "Often times, kids are struggling, and extracurricular activities can be a motivating factor for them to stay in school." He hopes that children from every neighborhood in Brooklyn benefit as he did from the influence of the Library: "I vividly remember walking from my apartment to my local branch with my books. My travels in life were based on dreams I had from the books I read growing up."

As a co-founder and retired CEO of a securities firm, Lewis knows firsthand how important it is to be tech-savvy.



"Now more than ever, I see that if a person doesn't have skill sets in technology, he or she is going to be left behind." Lewis believes that children who are introduced to digital resources at an early age will be better prepared for success in school and in the workplace. "Donors need to provide that bridge to technology resources in the Library that lower-income families often don't have access to."

Crown Heights Library children's librarian Cristina Rapisardi has seen the positive impact of the new laptops on the community she serves. "The laptops help in so many ways to assist patrons with job searching, writing their résumés, finding apartments, even

making medical appointments. So much of life these days requires computer access that having the laptops is practically a necessity."

Rapisardi notes that the laptops serve patrons from every walk of life, including the residents of local family shelters. "A mother was able to apply for a seat in pre-kindergarten for her son. She was even able to help her older son apply for a gifted program within his current school—an opportunity afforded her by the laptops," Cristina says.

To discover how you can give back to Brooklyn Public Library, visit us online at bklynlibrary.org/support.

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