

A LOOK INSIDE BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

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SPRING 2018

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



At this moment, Leonard Library is a perfect encapsulation of everything that Brooklyn means to me. It feels both new and old at once, as the library bustles about the business of story times, conversation groups and computer classes.

Erik Bobilin, Senior Librarian

Librarian Erik Bobilin’s depiction of Leonard Library in Williamsburg as “both old and new at once” couldn’t be more apt, not only for that particular branch—a Carnegie which opened in 1908 and featured in Betty Smith’s iconic *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*—but for every single Brooklyn Public Library branch across the borough.

BPL was founded in 1896 with a mission we are still committed to 120 years later: “to improve the quality of the minds of the people... and lay the foundation of a better civilization for the future.” But how we execute that mission has evolved at the same breakneck pace as our city.

Patrons once visited a handful of branches in person to check out printed materials in English, which they read at a carrel or at home. Today, patrons like Hallie Eng can peruse our collection of more than four million materials in 200 different languages on whichever printed or digital platform they choose. Patrons unable to visit their neighborhood branch can access the Library through programs such as Hospital Storytelling, which has been delivering suitcases of books to children at medical centers for nearly 20 years.

BPL remains committed to fostering literacy for readers of all ages, but our definition of literacy continues to expand. This issue of *Off the Shelf* features BPL’s new musical instrument lending library, which enables patrons to check out a violin or ukulele alongside their usual stack of books; the Brooklyn Fashion Academy, which immerses aspiring designers of all ages in fashion illustration, sample development, sustainable design, and more; and an interview with our eldest librarian, Irving Demsky, who at 80-years-old is teaching patrons how to navigate online resources. BPL librarians and staff believe Brooklynites should be fluent in the languages of digital technology, arts and culture, civic life, mathematics and finance, the sciences and more.

Demsky prides himself on an “adaptable service style,” a pride shared across our system. As our complex and vibrant borough continues to evolve, Brooklyn Public Library will, too.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Linda E. Johnson".

Linda E. Johnson
President & CEO



LIBRARIES ARE FOR EVERYONE

Want to support your library?
Visit bklynlib.org/standup to get involved.

PLANNING YOUR LEGACY

Give the Gift of Discovery & Learning

Remembering Brooklyn Public Library as a beneficiary in your will, trust or retirement plan ensures your legacy while providing for the Library's future.

To learn more about including Brooklyn Public Library in your estate plan and becoming a member of the Ingersoll Circle, the Library's planned giving society, please visit bklynlibrary.org/plannedgiving or contact Lauren Arana, Director of Individual Giving, at **718.230.2009** or larana@bklynlibrary.org.

My legacy gift is my way of acknowledging the role Brooklyn Public Library played in my life and supporting its essential role in the Brooklyn community.

Paula Silver,
Member of the Ingersoll Circle



On May 23, the MILL team hosted a kickoff celebration with performances by the BPL librarian band Lost in the Stacks, plus musicians from MILL’s partner organization, the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music. The party was held at Central Library, the home base where patrons can check out and return the lending library instruments.

According to librarian Kay Badalamenti, Central Library is already a great resource for music lovers, making it the ideal location for MILL. “The Library’s flagship branch has the largest collection of music scores, books on instructional methods for western instruments, as well as the largest collection of titles about music history, composers and performers, global music

Borrow a musical instrument— for free!—from BPL’s **Musical Instrument Lending Library**

BORROW A UKULELE & STRUM ALONG!



Visit **Central Library in Grand Army Plaza** and you might walk out with a book, a cup of coffee, and now...a ukulele! This spring, BPL’s Art & Music division launched the first musical instrument lending library in the New York City area. Library patrons 18 and up can borrow a violin, acoustic guitar, keyboard, drum pads, a drum pad practice set and the aforementioned ukulele for a period of eight weeks, all for free.

BPL’s Art & Music team was inspired to create the Musical Instrument Lending Library (MILL) after learning about similar programs in Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and New Jersey. “We visited the Free Library of Philadelphia’s Musical Instrument Collection to get ideas for running our own,” said Harold Stern, a music librarian at Central Library who oversees MILL along with fellow librarians Kay Badalamenti and Peter Otis. “Ours is the only one of its kind in NYC.”

MILL is funded by BKLYN Incubator, a Brooklyn Public Library program that helps BPL staff develop and launch fresh, creative programs. “BKLYN Incubator is such a great way to spark innovation with staff,” said Christine Schonhart, the assistant director of Central Library. “The team wanted to take this on because they felt MILL would fill a need with our patrons. The first core principle of the Library’s strategic plan is to foster literacy and a love of learning—this lending library does exactly that. It’s perfect for someone trying out an instrument for the first time, for someone who maybe can’t afford to purchase an instrument right now or for the seasoned musician who wants to try a different instrument.”

genres, music theory and the history of instruments. We expect the Musical Instrument Lending Library to become a vital part of BPL’s music collection and an important asset for building our community’s music literacy and knowledge.”

For beginning musicians, Central Library offers access to music databases and instructional websites, and once they borrow a MILL instrument, they can also take advantage of discounted classes at the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music through their Music Partners program.

The Musical Instrument Lending Library is still in its pilot phase, and BPL will have to take into account several factors when deciding whether to extend the program, including cost, feasibility and public interest. Based on the initial response, the public is definitely interested: even though MILL is brand new, the team has already fielded questions about expanding to allow borrowing for all ages and making instruments available at neighborhood libraries. “It’s great to know that so many people are excited about the MILL project,” said Christine Schonhart. “We can’t wait to get instruments into the hands of all the creative Brooklynites out there.”

Ready to make music? Visit bklynlibrary.org/musicloan to learn how to borrow a free instrument from BPL.

FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

BPL IS ENGAGING TEEN PATRONS IN CREATIVE, INNOVATIVE WAYS. UNDERSTANDING THAT TEENAGERS DON'T RESPOND TO "ONE SIZE FITS ALL" PROGRAMMING, LIBRARIANS HAVE CREATED A NUMBER OF NEW PROGRAMS, OFFERING SAFE SPACES FOR TEENS TO EXPLORE, CREATE AND BUILD PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE.

FOR BOOK LOVERS

BookMatch Teen Based on our popular librarian service, Bklyn BookMatch, this readers' advisory program teaches teens how to recommend books to their peers. Over the course of two months, participants learn how to conduct reader interviews, write compelling book reviews and curate book lists. In addition, the teens earn a stipend, gain workforce preparation, professional job training and exposure to a variety of career options, as well as guidance in writing and self-expression.

"BookMatch Teen is incredibly fulfilling because it's rare to work with the same group of teens every week," said librarian Lisa Goldstein, one of the program's leaders. "It's great to watch them get to know each other and to see them get more involved and comfortable with BPL. I hope they feel more engaged with libraries and know we value them."

The League of Readers (also known as LORe) is not your ordinary book club. LORe aims to morph the passion and energy of comic conventions into a teen book club, enabling participants to enjoy the camaraderie of fandom in their own community. During meetings, teenagers are connected to the source materials of popular geek fandoms and they have the opportunity to discuss, compare and create their very

own fan swag. "We try to make LORe unique by having our discussions go beyond the story's plot," said Bianca Hezekiah, a YA librarian at Eastern Parkway Library who runs LORe with colleague Ellen Weaver. "We take the story's themes and apply them to real life."

According to Hezekiah, the more open-ended the discussion question, the better. "The questions encourage teens to think about the book in a different way, and expand their understanding of what we've read. It's always awesome to hear what they come up with on their own; during our *Black Panther* discussion, the group brought up current politics and the presidency, which Ellen and I definitely did not expect."

FOR CREATIVES

Ned Vizzini Teen Writing Prize The Library's Teen Writing Contest is a chance for local teens to showcase their work in a supportive environment. Writers in grades 6–12 are invited to submit poetry and prose to be judged by a panel of BPL's expert young adult librarians for creativity, style and voice. The winners receive cash awards, have their pieces published in BPL's Teen Writing Journal and are honored at a reception in Central Library's Dweck Center. The Prize is made possible by the family, friends and fans of Ned Vizzini, a writer of popular young adult novels who grew up in Park Slope, Brooklyn.



Brooklyn Robotics League



Ned Vizzini Teen Writing Prize



Teen Bookmatch

BCAPteen BCAPteen investigates the arts, nature, culture and community through photojournalism. During this two-week mini-internship, teens learn about photography, complete visual storytelling assignments, develop an independent project and create an online portfolio. The teens earn a stipend and volunteer hours while building skills, having fun and being creative. This is a Brooklyn Cultural Adventures Program with a home base at BPL's Central Library.

FOR TECHIES

Brooklyn Robotics League This program is for teens who love LEGOS, robotics, teamwork and friendly competition. Participants join a team at their local library and learn STEM concepts and how to use LEGO EV3 robotics at weekly meetings. Teams from across the borough then showcase their new skills and compete against each other at Central Library's final competition.

"Robotics League is fun, educational and challenging without the structure of school," explained Theresa Chukwu, a technology training supervisor at Central Library. "This program teaches them teamwork, conflict resolution, coding and how to engineer a robot. I think teens love this program because they all work towards a common goal. It's not about *me versus you*, it's about *us versus the challenge*."

Today's Teens, Tomorrow's Techies (T4) is a technology training program for teens who are looking to gain valuable work and leadership experience while giving back to their community. Participants learn new computer skills at a two-week summer technology institute, then share those skills by helping patrons use BPL computers. They also assist library staff with computer troubleshooting and computer training workshops for the public. The teens receive stipends, earn community service credits for school and have the chance to explore and develop their interest in the tech world!

FOR FUTURE LIBRARIANS

Youth Council & Urban Art Jamm BPL's Youth Council is made up of teens ages 14–19 who want to share their voice in library decision-making, event-planning and leadership. They meet regularly to plan the Urban Art Jamm, an annual event at Central Library that celebrates NYC teen artists with performances and art. In the process, they earn a stipend and learn about budgeting, marketing and the ins and outs of how libraries operate.

Librarians of Tomorrow This innovative, hands-on internship program is for 10–12th graders from diverse backgrounds who have an interest in library careers. Made possible by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the rigorous internship is a crash course in librarianship: participants complete 35 hours of training and field trips, plus 100 hours of hands-on work experience; create a capstone project based on special interests; assist with BPL events and projects; welcome patrons to the library and provide customer service; and select a program track and work with a mentor to learn specialized skills. All Librarians of Tomorrow interns earn a stipend for their hard work.

"We really see a need for paid teen internships—279 teens applied and we could only accept 60," said Jennifer Thompson, the Librarians of Tomorrow program coordinator. "These teens really want to give back to their community. The internship looks good on their resume, it looks good on college applications and quite a few are interested in pursuing librarianship as a career."

"Teens are at this sort of magical age between adulthood and childhood," continued Thompson. "This is the prime time to plant the seeds of librarianship, to explain what libraries really do and to break the stigma that libraries are just about books and shushing."

BROOKLYN FASHION ACADEMY



Fashion Academy participants attended programs and classes to prepare for their fashion show.



Kareem Knights didn't even learn to sew until he was in college, majoring in accounting. But today he is a member of the inaugural class of the Library's Bklyn Fashion Academy, a comprehensive 12-week program for aspiring women's wear designers.

Along with 14 other designers—selected from a pool of more than 50 applicants and ranging in age from mid-20s to early 70s—Knights has been hard at work this spring. Industry partners like Mood U and Pratt Institute's Brooklyn Fashion and Design Accelerator (BF+DA) have hosted participants for intensive day-long workshops in fashion illustration, sustainable design practices, sourcing and sample garment development.

"Brooklyn Public Library is already the first stop for the borough's many creative entrepreneurs," said Linda E. Johnson, President and CEO of Brooklyn Public Library. "Now aspiring fashion designers will learn how to create, market and source clothing as part of the inaugural Bklyn Fashion Academy."

Students have spent hours in the library's makeshift design studios—complete with mannequins, fabric swatches and sewing machines—finishing their collections for a fashion show on May 11. The show saluted the history and fashion of Les Sapeurs,

a colorful Congolese subculture dedicated to the cult of style as a way to transcend severe poverty.

Student Mariya Kelly designed what she called an "aura suit" for the show and explained much of her work is "about spirituality manifested into fashion." She has been interested in fashion since she was young. "I was dressing myself when I was two," Kelly said. Her designs have also been influenced by the many places she has lived including India and of course New York. "New York is a city that inspires, humbles and embraces you in a comforting hug of possibility."

The program was developed through BKLYN Incubator, the library's program empowering staff to build new public programs from the ground up. Business and Career Librarian Timothy Tully—who founded the clothing company Flomotion—provided business and marketing workshops for the group. And Lynnsie Augustin, the outreach specialist for the Library's Business and Career Center, who designs clothes herself, said that even before she worked for BPL, she used to walk by Central Library and think what a great space it would be for a fashion show. The rest, as they say, is history.



CHECK OUT BKLYN

Emma Stone recommends

Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters and Seymour: an Introduction by J.D. Salinger

Share your favorite books from our collection and let Brooklynites know what you recommend! Post a photo holding your selection on Twitter or Instagram and tag it **#checkoutBKLYN**.



A LIBRARY WITHOUT WALLS

Can an old suitcase and a new book make you feel better? That's the idea behind the Library's **hospital visitation program**. Volunteers and some library staff, carrying books in suitcases, visit children in hospitals and leave a book behind they can keep.

"A library without walls," is how Andre Powe, coordinator of hospital storytelling, describes the program.

The idea is simple. Volunteers spread out across the region with books and smiles to help sick children—or children anxious about a visit to the doctor—feel better.

Susan, a volunteer, recalls meeting a 12-year-old boy at a local medical center. He wasn't feeling well but once he got a book, he smiled. "It took his mind off of his condition at that moment," she said.

The program has been in operation for almost 20 years. Powe coordinates a team of approximately 15 people who bring books and good cheer to well over 3,000 children in hospitals, clinics and outpatient centers throughout the year.

Annie has been volunteering with the program for about three years. She says introducing children to literature helps in two ways. It gives them a useful tool anytime they have to wait or are homesick and it helps right in the moment.

"They are waiting, they're irritable and you walk in with a suitcase full of wonderful distractions," she said.

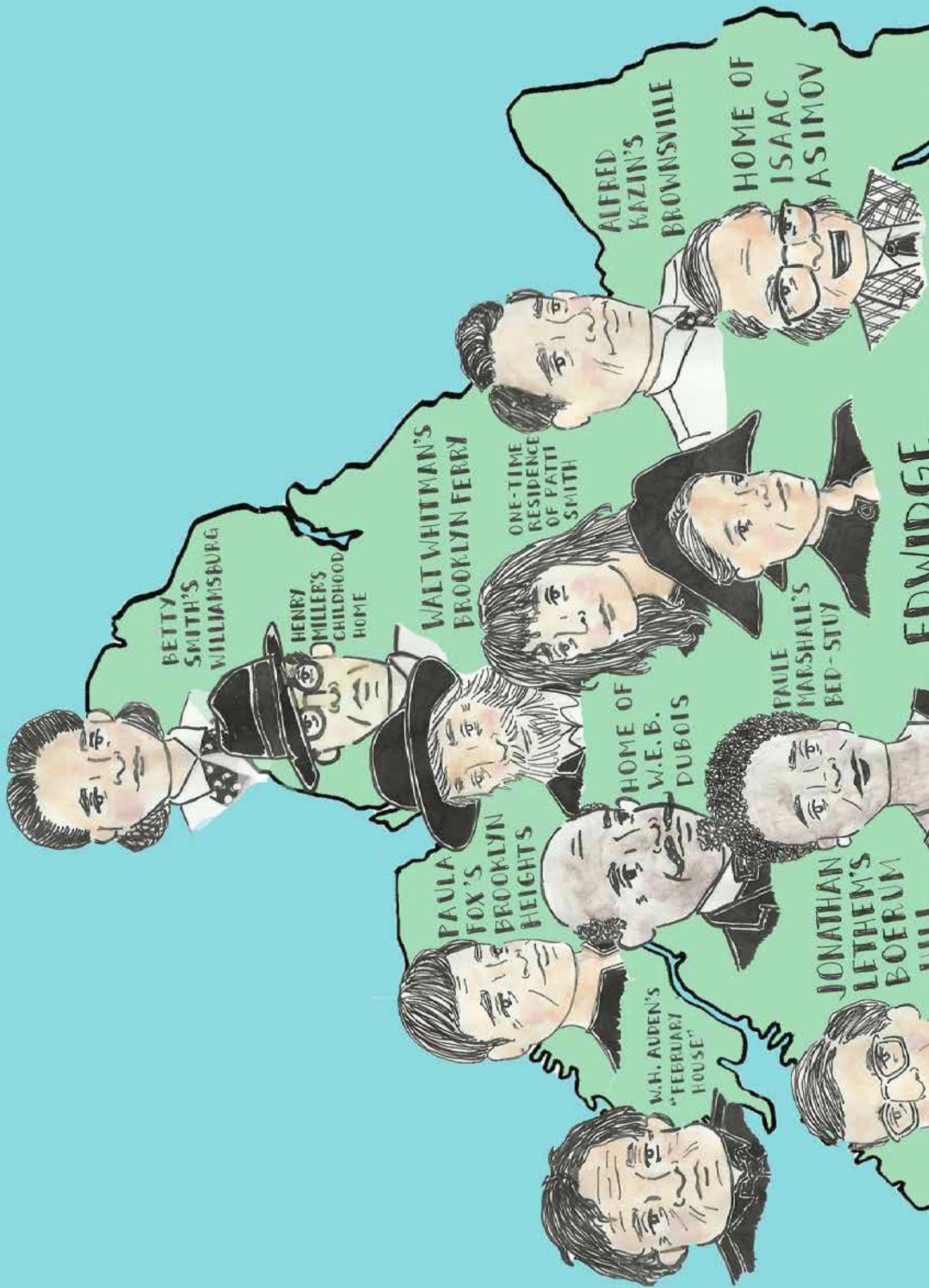
Another volunteer, Mitsi, agreed. "They have no expectations and then you walk in and make someone's day," she said.

Mitsi has been carrying her suitcase full of books around town for two years. As a child, she liked reading and has especially fond memories of going every Saturday to the library on Cortelyou Road. Now, she shares that love of books with children in outpatient clinics.

"Sometimes, they don't feel well, but they see a book and get excited. It changes their demeanor. They can focus on something other than pain or illness and forget where they are waiting."

Mitsi says the visits make her feel good too. "It is so rewarding. It opens your heart and allows you to let go of your own issues."

Powe says the program is the only one of its kind anywhere in the world. Still, at the core, it is really a community-based program, reaching children all across the borough. "We work from a suitcase doing the most essential aspects of library work."





Can you identify the unnamed writer in the center of our map?
Tweet at us, [@bklynlibrary](https://twitter.com/bklynlibrary), with your guesses!

Illustration by Kate Gavino

BROOKLYN IN THE BOOKS

How many books about, set in, or for Brooklyn have you read? The County of Kings is widely known as a literary hub; here are a few more titles to reinforce the love affair with your hometown!

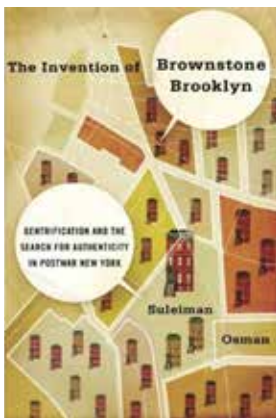


BOOKMATCH LIBRARIAN SPOTLIGHT
RAKISHA KEARNS-WHITE
SENIOR YA LIBRARIAN, YOUTH WING

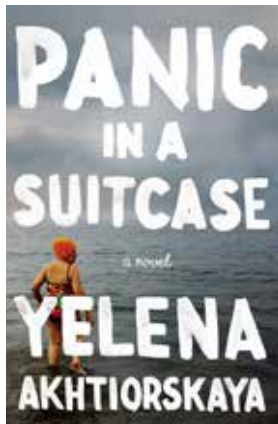
Rakisha Kearns-White is a lifelong Brooklynite and a 13-year veteran of Brooklyn Public Library. As a young adult librarian, she enjoys reading coming-of-age and teen romance. She’s also a mom of 11-year-old and 13-year-old daughters, and they help her stay hip to what tweens and teens are into. When she’s not mothering or being a librarian, Rakisha spends her free time listening to podcasts, watching an inordinate amount of movies and searching for the perfect blue lipstick.



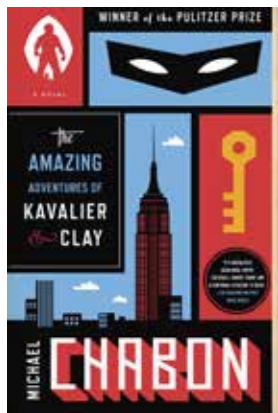
Visit BKLYN BookMatch online at bklynlibrary.org/bookmatch and complete a reader profile to get your personalized book suggestions today!



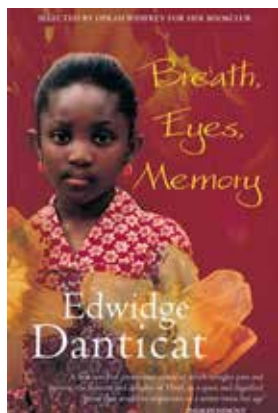
The Invention of Brownstone Brooklyn: Gentrification and the Search for Authenticity in Postwar New York
by Suleiman Osman



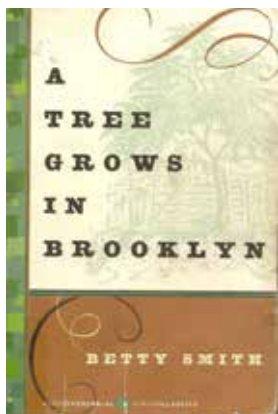
Panic in a Suitcase
by Yelena Akhtiorskaya



The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay
by Michael Chabon



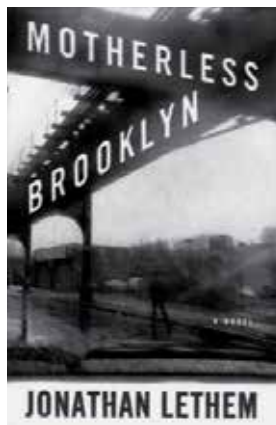
Breath, Eyes, Memory
by Edwidge Danticat



A Tree Grows in Brooklyn
by Betty Smith



Bad Girl Blvd
by Erica Hilton



Motherless Brooklyn
by Jonathan Lethem



Between Madison and Palmetto
by Jacqueline Woodson



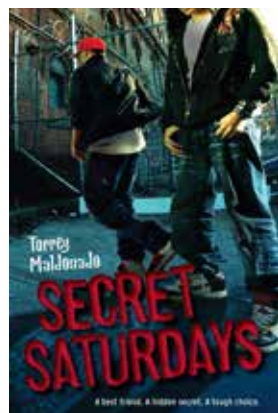
The Coldest Winter Ever
by Sister Souljah



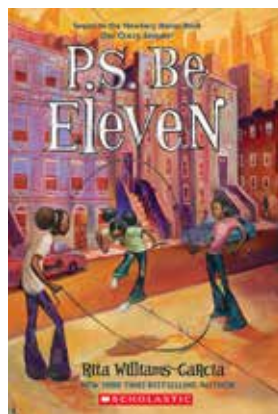
Brooklyn: A Novel
by Colm Tóibín



The Brooklyn Nine: A Novel in Nine Innings
by Alan Gratz

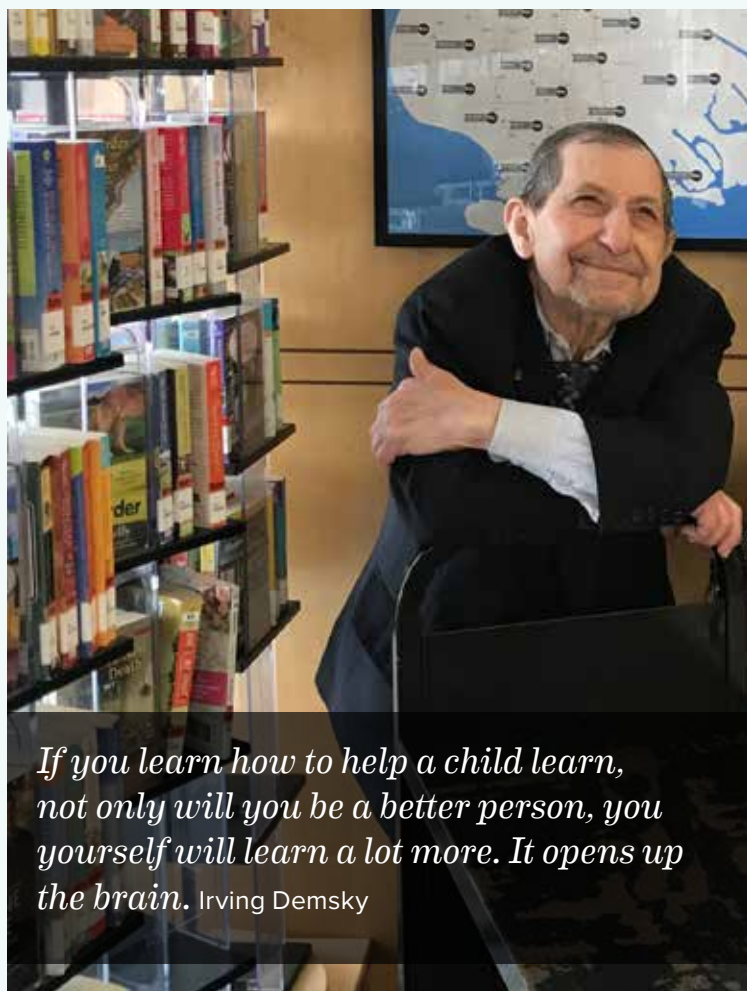


Secret Saturdays
by Torrey Maldonado



P.S. Be Eleven
by Rita Williams-Garcia

Brooklyn Public Library's oldest employee prefers to see the world through the eyes of a child.



If you learn how to help a child learn, not only will you be a better person, you yourself will learn a lot more. It opens up the brain. Irving Demsky

At the age of 88, Irving Demsky's brain is as open as it was when he started working for BPL 40 years ago. The Gravesend librarian is a voracious learner, passionate about helping others seek knowledge so he can learn from the experience himself. It's part of the reason he's still working well into his eighties.

"The exposure in a public library to different kinds of people, different interests, it's one of the things that has made me very, very happy," Demsky says. Plus, his doctor recently told him that if he retires he'll be dead in a month. Demsky added, "He said it with a smile on his face."

Irving Demsky grew up in Brooklyn near the Williamsburgh and Leonard branches. After an unsatisfying career in consumer research, he found himself, at the age of 40, unsure

of what he wanted to do with his life. He took a career aptitude test and librarian came back as the best match for him. Though rabbi and social worker also made the list, Demsky said, "I thought only library work was going to make me happy."

And it did. His first branch was Brighton Beach in 1977 and by his own count he's since worked at between 10 and 12 branches, plus many more if you count part-time work. Before coming to Gravesend, he spent 22 years at Brooklyn Heights and became part of the community there. Though he wasn't a children's librarian, he was known for entertaining children; "reading to them, singing songs in other languages, blowing up balloons."

Demsky prides himself on an adaptable service style with patrons. "They have different ways of thinking, different ways of approaching their problems than I do," he said. "If I'm having trouble understanding them, that's not their fault. I've got to work at it." He wants to connect patrons to what they need but more importantly, he wants them to know how to find it themselves online. "To me, that's as important as reading."

It makes sense that when computers first became available for use in the branches, Demsky was one of the first to volunteer to teach the public to use them. As always, he saw through the eyes of a child when sharing the computer's complexities with a pre-digital public.

"I would even go to the point of picking up the monitor and saying, 'This is called the monitor. If you call it a television set, I'll know what you mean, don't worry about it. Here's a keyboard. You call it a typewriter, I'll know what you mean, don't worry about it. And unless you take it and throw it, you're not going to break it. Don't worry about it.'"

Irving Demsky has no plans to retire. Why would he? With a mind as curious as his, Demsky craves the discovery that comes with the endless queries a librarian gets throughout the day. He loves looking up the meanings of patron surnames he's never heard before, a constantly exciting activity in his ever-diversifying borough. Most of all, he's just happier in public.

"Sometimes I get afraid that people get so involved with their own gadgetry at home that they miss out the experience of coming into a location where there are other people. Where there are children, even if the children are noisy and bother the hell out of them." Irving Demsky will not be missing out on this experience anytime soon.

"I'm working in a library because it gives me such satisfaction and the more I can do for other people, the better I feel," he said, walking back to the desk and waiting to greet whoever might walk through the door.



BPL PRESENTS

Arts & Culture at Central Library

Brooklyn Public Library offers 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.

EXHIBITION

MOLLY CRABAPPLE & MARWAN HISHAM: *SYRIA IN INK*

MAY 15 – JUNE 30, 2018

Syria in Ink presents vivid images and words of the Syrian conflict, the country's occupation by ISIS, and the besieged consciousness of a young Syrian man coming of age during the war. The exhibition includes over 50 original drawings by artist Molly Crabapple, BPL Katowitz Radin Artist-in-Residence, and the voice and words of author and journalist Marwan Hisham. With pen and brush, together they capture Syria from before its precipitous fall to its current state of crisis and mass displacement.

Central Library, Grand Lobby

Opening Reception: Tuesday, May 15, 6 – 8 pm

SPRING SERIES SPOTLIGHT AUTHORS

Pete Hamill with Sam Roberts

A Killing for Christ

Wednesday, May 16, 7:30 pm

Central Library, Trustees Room

Cutter Wood

Love and Death in the Sunshine State

Wednesday, May 23, 6:30 pm

Park Slope Library

New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu:

The 2018 Kahn Humanities Lecture

Tuesday, May 29, 7:30 pm

Central Library, Dweck Center



Leonard Library



Tucked on the corner of Devoe Street and Leonard Avenue in a tree-lined section of Williamsburg, Leonard Library is one of Brooklyn Public Library's original Carnegie branches, built by Scottish businessman and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in the early 1900s.

The branch officially opened in 1908, and has served its lively and evolving community ever since. "At this moment, Leonard Library is just a perfect encapsulation of everything that Brooklyn means to me," said Erik Bobilin, the library's former supervisor. "It feels both new and old at once, as the library bustles about the business of story times, conversation groups and computer classes."

Leonard Library has always been noted for its inviting atmosphere, especially for a large population of younger patrons and families. "The Leonard community is currently very family-oriented—especially young families, an increasing percentage of which are newly immigrated (from Europe, from Asia, from Latin America)," said Erik. "And I used to hear from parents all the time that they considered the library their extended living room." Erik also pointed out that, although the Italian community that thrived near the library from the 1950s to the 1980s is still represented in the branch, he has seen many younger, single professionals begin to change the face of Williamsburg.

"It is certainly the case that gentrification is visible, both in the neighborhood and in the patron base of the branch," Erik added. But he notes that Leonard is still able to serve this growing and diverse population. "For several years now we've had—thanks in large part to our fabulous children's librarian—Japanese, Chinese, French and Polish language story times, as a way to keep up and remain inclusive to the various community groups."



Nancy Smith Pfeiffer, daughter of Betty Smith

In addition to providing inclusive children's programming—an initiative that spans throughout the BPL system—Leonard Library hosts a support group for new and expecting parents, art talks, yoga classes and provides resources for new Americans to obtain citizenship.

"I think Leonard has a very homey, very classic library atmosphere," said Erik. "The library remains a comfortable, livable space that reminds our patrons of the libraries (and the story times) of their childhood."

Leonard Library, a single-story building designed by architect William B. Tubby, also notably holds a place in literary hearts for being featured in Betty Smith's iconic novel *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*. In the book, Francie Nolan visited the library and discovered that "the world was hers for the reading." In 2008, Brooklyn Public Library staff joined Smith's family and the NYC Parks Department to plant a tree in the author's memory outside of the branch, and just this year local artist and visual historian Amy Lyons created a work of art to honor Williamsburg, the library and Smith's novel. She was able to tie in the historic aspect of scenes from that novel directly into her artwork for the library.

If you've never been to Leonard, mark your calendar for a visit soon. Perhaps sit in on a Thursday English Conversation Group, or a Friday afternoon Teen Tech Time. Or anything happening on a Wednesday. "I don't think I've ever seen a photograph that captures the spirit of the borough so well as the one that exists in my mind of Wednesday afternoons at the Leonard Library," said Erik. We invite you to come witness it for yourself!





Do you remember a specific book that made a difference in your early years? I'd probably point to the *Little House* series—not only were they some of my hands-down favorite books as a child, but I still love re-reading them as an adult. I think these were probably the first books that were simple enough for me to read as a child but complex enough to really draw me into the story and let my imagination run with the scenes described in them.

How do you interact with the library now as an adult?

I am still an active library patron! I try to go about once a week. I mean, bookstores are great, but let's face it—how much shelf space does one really have if you're living in NY?

Hallie Eng was born and raised in Brooklyn. Although she went away to school and subsequently traveled the world for work, she found her way back home. She's a human resources professional by day, and an avid reader by night (and during her daily commute!).

What is your first BPL/McKinley library-related memory?

The library has always, always been a consistent part of my childhood memories. My parents were new immigrants to the U.S. and didn't speak very much English, so the library—and specifically, McKinley, which was the closest branch to my childhood home—was a crucial part of my education.

Growing up, how did you use the library? From weekly trips to take out new books to read (my brother and I were given strict quotas of how many fiction vs. nonfiction books we were allowed), to calling the Homework Helpline for homework help, to acquiring some of our very first books through the RIF program—so many of my childhood memories are intertwined with Brooklyn Public Library.

What compelled you to donate to BPL, specifically

McKinley Library? I think the library system is enormously important and provides a wonderful service for the public in general, but especially for kids who may have had backgrounds like mine that truly needed the library for social or economic reasons. I speak to friends and colleagues now who come from countries where free public libraries don't exist, and they remind me about how wonderful it is that we offer this to our residents here. I donate because I want this service to continue, and I particularly want to support the smaller branches that may sometimes get overlooked for funding. I've personally gotten so much and benefited so much from having access to the library—I want to make sure that others get to as well.

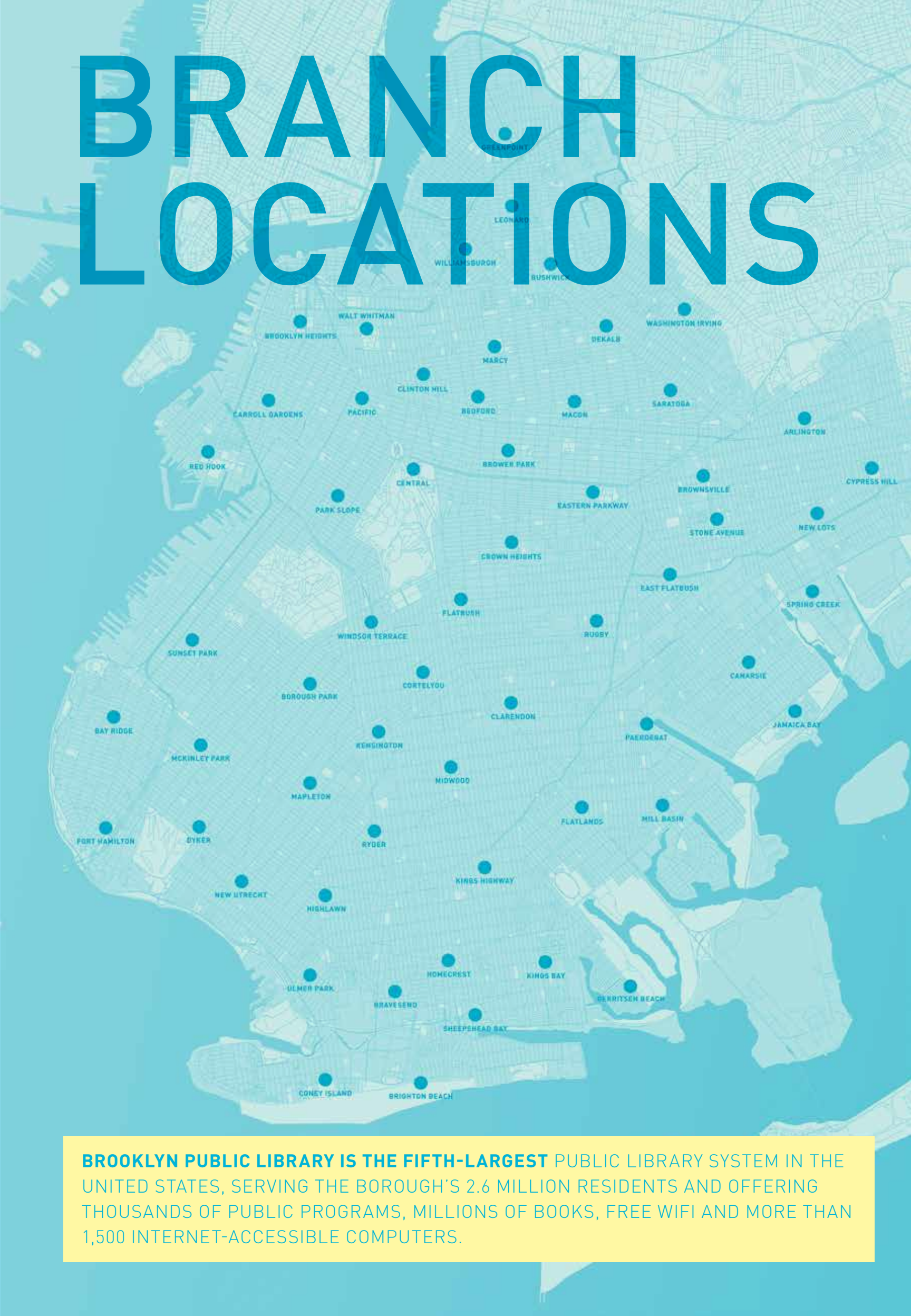
Why do you feel libraries are still important/relevant

in today's society? Not everyone has the luxury of being able to buy all the books and reference materials that they may want or need may want or need. Not everyone has the know-how, or the support system to teach themselves, how to do research, or how to write a resume, or any number of the myriad services the library offers. Yes, I do believe that libraries are very important and relevant.

WHITMAN circle

Brooklyn Public Library's Whitman Circle is a community of champions who believe that all Brooklynites deserve the chance to discover their potential at our libraries. Members enjoy special access to the best of the Library and Brooklyn's literary scene, and provide vital support for free children's programs, essential literacy services, community-based outreach and books that over a million Brooklynites rely on each year. For more information, visit bklynlibrary.org/whitmancircle or contact Sarah Butler, Manager of Patron Programs sbutler@bklynlibrary.org.

BRANCH LOCATIONS

A map of Brooklyn, New York, with numerous blue dots indicating the locations of Brooklyn Public Library branches. The dots are distributed across the five boroughs: Manhattan, Queens, Richmond, Kings, and Queens. The map is overlaid with a light blue grid. The title 'BRANCH LOCATIONS' is written in large, bold, blue capital letters at the top left of the map.

BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY IS THE FIFTH-LARGEST PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES, SERVING THE BOROUGH'S 2.6 MILLION RESIDENTS AND OFFERING THOUSANDS OF PUBLIC PROGRAMS, MILLIONS OF BOOKS, FREE WIFI AND MORE THAN 1,500 INTERNET-ACCESSIBLE COMPUTERS.

Bklyn Public Library

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