

THE LAST OF THE *Libraries*

Within the first week of 2023, the new **Northmont Branch** (700 West National Road, Englewood) opened its doors to patrons. Branch staff, four Reimagining Works artists, and beloved DML mascots Pip and Cosmo were on hand to meet and greet. The eye-catching Children's Area theme is "Building Connections," and it combines a design of a 16'x4' Lego mosaic that was built by youth patrons of the Library and a structure built from Tubelox. Surrounding communities such as Englewood, Clayton, Philipsburg, and Union will benefit from the new 19,000 square foot facility for years to come.

NORTHMONT

Open:



HUBER HEIGHTS

On Friday, June 2, DML history was made when the capstone project of the **Libraries for a Smarter Future** initiative, the **Huber Heights Branch**, opened its doors to the public. Located at 6243 Brandt Pike, part of an \$11.8 million investment for the city as part of redeveloped land around it, it is the second largest Branch in the system, weighing in at 27,000 square feet. A unique Cultural Commons area is the center attraction, key for holding gatherings and performances. The "Larger than Life"-themed Children's Area pleases all the young patrons. Near the end of 2023, it began hosting "Immersive Music" sessions that showcased the Branch's new Hallet Davis Grand Piano.



Community Development Reshapes Services

In an effort to bring more focus to DML's career, business, and nonprofit services, the LaunchPoint area that used to be on the second floor moved down to the Opportunity @ Patterson, and that area was renamed the **Opportunity Center**. Additionally, the Workforce Development team - consisting of Manager Ann Riegle Crichton, Business Services Specialist Camille Hall, and Nonprofit Services Specialist Jessica Hunter - became known as Community Development. A new Community Wellness Specialist position was also created and the process to fill it began. The Community Wellness Specialist - became known as Community Development. This space is used for programs and events and offers a place for the specialists to meet with patrons interested in learning more about DML's Community Development services.

Highlights:

DML's Phrase of the Year:

free to belong.

DML introduced a new motto and logo that now appears on our website, our email signatures, and all published material for patrons called "**free to belong**," which exemplifies DML's promise that all patrons are free to belong within the walls of each DML location. Patrons are free to read what they want to read, check out what they want to check out, and essentially, they are free to be who they are - all without judgement. Two-sided, the epitaph also reminds patrons that there is no charge to join the Library for Montgomery County residents, no charge to check out materials, and there is no charge to attend Library programs. While one must pay for printing costs and lost books, at least they can do so knowing that they are still **free to belong**.

Partnerships:

MONTGOMERY COUNTY AUDITOR'S OFFICE

DML RECEIVES DONATIONS ON GIVING TUESDAY

Generally known as a global day of giving, **Giving Tuesday** is held each year on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving. Nonprofits all over the world kindly ask supporters to give what they can toward a cause, in an effort to perhaps expand on the true meaning of the upcoming holiday season. In 2023, DML patrons and community members shared their good will and spirit by donating a total of \$11,890 in varied amounts ranging upwards of \$500 per donation!



In 2023, property values in Montgomery County increased (as they are assessed every three years), sending homeowners into a tailspin. The Montgomery County Auditor's Office utilized **six DML Branches to hold free forum sessions**

to educate homeowners on how property values are determined and what could they do if they disagreed with their assessed value. These sessions were a preemptive step to preparing homeowners for filing a formal property value appeal to the Board of Revision in the open window of January 1 - March 31, 2024.

Awards:

TROTWOOD STUDENT PATRON READS ON!

For the second year in a row, a young reader patron from the Trotwood Branch was selected by the Ohio Educational Library Media Association (OELMA) to receive the **2023 READ On!** Ohio Award for Children and Teens. Stormy Carson, a student at the Imagine Woodbury Academy, received OELMA's award in the SW region, K-2 categories. Nominated by then Trotwood Children's Librarian, Dani Gustavich (now at the E.C. Doren Branch), Stormy received her award at a ceremony in Columbus in October. The OELMA award celebrates enthusiastic readers who are nominated by schools and public librarians. Including 2023, Ohio has been awarded the OELMA for eight years.



THE LIBERTY BELL AWARD RINGS

In May, Jacqueline Gazda, an Information Services Librarian at the Main Library, received the **Liberty Bell Award** after being nominated by the Dayton Bar Association (DBA) for her work in orchestrating DML's free legal clinics. With help from the Greater Dayton Volunteer Lawyers Project (GDVLP), the Montgomery

County Defenders' Office, and other area courts, she began holding Driver's License Reinstatement and Record Sealing Clinics in 2022. Throughout 2023, several other DML locations hosted the free clinics as well, thus spreading the benefits of the clinics to more community members in need - approximately 500 patrons total.



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

OLDER ADULTS ARE FOCUS OF "FRIENDLY" SERIES

Between September and November, DML hosted a series of "age-friendly" community conversations funded by the **Dayton Foundation** and facilitated by **Miami Valley Planning Commission Del Mar Encore Fellow** Donna Kastner. The purpose of the series was to obtain feedback from Montgomery County's older adult population as to what their needs are for services and infrastructure in our region that would support aging and encourage a robust quality of life. Four programs between three DML locations were held and included a discussion on such topics as retirement and housing.

A Book Sanctuary Milestone

Early in the year, Steve Moser, Jeffrey Trzeciak, and Holly Richards created a proposal to present to DML's Board of Trustees, asking them to consider officially naming DML a **Book Sanctuary**, which they did on February 15. Being a Book Sanctuary means that DML pledges to address the issue of banned books year-round and offer support to our patrons' rights to intellectual freedom by continuing to provide diverse and inclusive materials and programs. The City of Chicago was the first to declare their entire library system a Book Sanctuary. Since then, over 2,400 libraries and other like facilities have joined the cause. In addition to being named a Book Sanctuary, DML also became a member of the American Library Association in 2023.



Highlights OF THE YEAR:



Holocaust Exhibit

Americans and the Holocaust was a traveling exhibit from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum that made a stop at DML between May and June. DML was one of only 50 other academic/public libraries that were selected to host the exhibit, which explored important themes in American history that affected the world's response to Nazism, including xenophobia and antisemitism. DML also hosted several companion programs, including a visit from Marshall Weiss, an author and historian, who shared how Dayton responded to Nazi Germany and the Holocaust in *Daytonians and the Holocaust: The View from Here*.

DML: A Solid PRIDE Ally

In 2022, DML adopted **PRIDE 365**, meaning that DML celebrates and recognizes members of the LGBTQIA2S+ community all year long, not just during PRIDE Month in June. In April 2023, DML held its first PRIDE Prom for high school students and their allies to attend. The event was free and offered dancing, food, crafts, and community resources from our partners: Q+ Health Alliance, Planned Parenthood Southwest Ohio Region, The Rubi Girls, and PFLAG Dayton. Twenty-nine patrons attended.

Express Brings Safety to Branch Area

When the West Branch (at the corner of Rt. 35 and Abbey Avenue in Dayton), opened near the end of 2021, a general concern was how patrons living across Rt. 35 would cross safely to get to the Branch. To improve access and safety, the City of Dayton offered the **West Branch Express** as an option by providing free transportation during peak Library hours. The service began on July 1 and is scheduled to remain in place through 2026. It services five area neighborhoods, makes hourly stops, including at the Job Center, and has an accessibility lift. The Express was made possible by support from the CareSource Foundation, and the Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority donated two paratransit vehicles. In the meantime, the City of Dayton will continue to seek funding to construct a pedestrian bridge over Rt. 35 at Abbey Avenue.

Doren's Legacy Drives On

In 2023, DML's current **Bookmobile** turned 18! In the last year alone, the Bookmobile has seen almost 9,000 students from 28 schools and rotated 30 service stops around the county. It has also appeared in parades and at county events - too numerous to say - over the years. Needless to say, it was time for a new Bookmobile. DML set out on a mission to raise \$450,000, the goal for a new one that would allow for greater accessibility for children with limited mobility and would allow for longer trips to more rural areas. As of December 20, \$437,375 had been raised for DML's new Bookmobile. Thank you to those who donated!

Hot Spots Add to the Summer Heat

On August 1, DML added to the dog days of summer (in a global warming-friendly-sort-of-way) when **187 Franklin T10 mobile hotspot kits** that had been added to DML's circulating collection became available for patron check out. In post pandemic life, DML recognized a need to provide something for patrons so they could connect on the go, at home, or at school. The kits provide 4G service to as many as 10 Wi-Fi-ready devices at a time, such as computers, laptops, tablets, and even smart phones. Check outs for the kits work just like other DML items.

2023 Programs:

WRITERS/EDUCATORS SPEAK OF WORKS, EXPERIENCES



A major coup for DML programming in 2023 was to have two respected and well-known writers grace through the Library's doors as part of the Executive Director's Author Series. The first was **Brendan Slocumb**, author of the bestselling novel, *The Violin Conspiracy*. In May, he stopped by to discuss that and his upcoming *Symphony of Secrets*. With 25 years of experience in teaching music to K-12 students, he has performed with numerous symphonies and is the founder of Hands Across American.

aja monet, a community organizer, Blues poet, and educator, was DML's second guest in October. *my mother was a freedom fighter*, a 2017 collection of her poems, was nominated for a NAACP Image Award for Poetry. She took part in a conversation about how her debut album and most recent work, *when the poems do what they do*, expresses themes of Black resistance, love, and a quest for joy, as well as how her work as a whole intersects at the crossroads of art, politics, and culture.

Approximately 250 patrons combined attended the **Executive Director's Author Series** programs, which will continue in 2024!



ODE GRANT EXPANDS KEY PROGRAMS

Near the end of 2022, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) awarded DML a Libraries Accelerating Learning grant in the amount of almost \$250,000, part of which was used to expand two key DML programs:

The **Kindergarten Club** began at the Miamisburg Branch in 2022, and by the summer of 2023, six additional Branches hosted one 8-week series. A total of 556 kindergarten patrons, along with their parents/caregivers, attended. Twelve Branches anticipated holding Club sessions within the first few months of 2024, and DML plans for all Branches to offer Kindergarten Club by summer 2024.

DML rebranded their "Rock Your Homework" motto to become **Homework Help Centers (HHC)**. The first HHC began in 2017, and by 2022, Centers existed at three Branches. Supported mainly by volunteers, DML designated a dedicated Homework Help Manager, Liz Hale, who hired staff, thus making it a staff-led service. At the beginning of 2023, four Branches had Centers, and then in the fall, six Branches. At the start of 2024, DML will have seven Branches with Centers. By September 2024, DML's hope is to have Centers in up to ten Branches.

