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The Hamlet

The Official Newsletter of the Mountain Brook Library Foundation
a supporting organization of O'Neal Library

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Noodleheads and Dolphins – a fish story?

Library Director,
Lindsy Gardner

Have you ever heard of Noodlehead books? Neither had I until I tagged along on a Crestline Elementary Kindergarten class tour recently. When the tour guides – staff from the Children's Department- pointed out the Noodlehead books, the faces of the young students lit up with glee. Apparently, right now, Noodlehead books are all the rage with the young crowd. The Children's Department staff always know exactly what books are most popular, what classic books have endured, and what non-fiction topics are most in demand. They also know how to make the students giggle with funny puppet skits about using the library and how to impress the youngsters with a behind-the-scenes look at the book drop and staff workroom.

I observed the Kindergarten tours because I love seeing children get excited about books, learning, and the library. During the pandemic, I sorely missed seeing that spark of curiosity when a child finds the perfect book at the perfect moment.

At the conclusion of the tour, one young lady was poring over a beginning reader about ocean life. "What is your favorite fish?" I asked. She quickly replied that her favorite ocean animal was a dolphin, but dolphins were mammals not fish. She spouted several other facts about dolphins. I wouldn't be surprised if the next time I saw her in the library she was looking for a biography on Jacques Cousteau!

-Lindsy

Harry Potter

and the Prisoner of Student Debt

Teaching Life Skills Through Literature

Teenagers at The O'Neal Library are getting to experience Harry Potter in a brand-new way in 2022. Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Student Debt is a multi-month program designed to teach young adults important life skills in a fun and relaxed setting. On the first Friday of every month, teens convene in the large meeting room of the Library for dinner, a Harry Potter-themed craft, a skill building lesson, and to watch one of the Harry Potter films. Thus far topics have included choosing the right college to fit your budget and interests, how to handle the stress when taking exams, budgeting basics, and easy recipes for dorm room cooking.

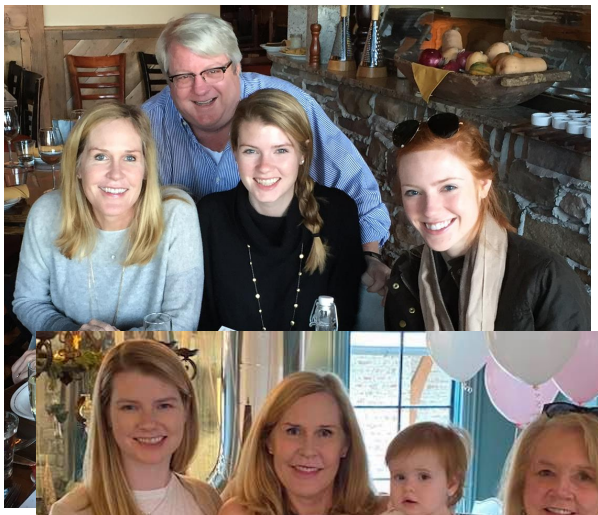
It's not all facts and figures, though! Learning real-life skills can be a lot of fun! Participants have used Harry Potter inspired money to buy treats and prizes while learning budgeting skills. They have also learned sewing techniques to create their own plush owls, and have made (and eaten) delicious edible chocolate frogs. The creative programming will continue with activities such as making kitten plates - a la Dolores Umbridge - and stirring up a recipe of butter beer.

Upcoming programs will have tips on resume writing, preparing for job interviews, and will include very special visits from current college students and recent graduates.

If you know a student in grades 7-12 who might be interested in participating in this unique and educational experience, have them register for the program in the teen section of the Library's website, or call 205-445-1121 for more information.

All in the Family

The O'Neal Library has been a family affair for my entire life. Growing up in Mountain Brook, The O'Neal Library was my happy place. My Mom would load up my three brothers and me into our station wagon (naturally a woody with a wayback seat) and take us to the library. My favorite memories seemed to revolve around the summer reading programs. As an avid reader, the programs challenged me to read as much as I could each summer. Throughout junior high and high school, my friends and I would meet at the library to work on our term papers and to socialize.



I introduced Kurt and our children to the Library early on as well. Once again, the summer reading program was a must for our family. Now it's time to bring our grand-daughter to the Library and introduce a third generation to the joys of reading.

As an adult my favorite time was the Library's Annual Book Sale. When we moved back from Chicago in 2016, I joined the Friends of the Library. I began helping Lynda Weaver sort through all of the books donated by the Mountain Brook community for the annual book sale. When Lynda moved out of town, I became responsible for sorting through all of the books. I touch almost every book that is donated and determine whether it can be sold at the book sale, potentially sold on Amazon, or should be donated to other charities. It is the greatest job ever - so fun to see all the treasures among the donated books!

My husband, Kurt grew up in Tuscaloosa and had a strong reading habit. Friedman Library in downtown Tuscaloosa was his access to many books. They didn't have the programs like the O'Neal Library has, but he has very fond memories spent amongst the stacks of books there. His career took him away from reading for pleasure except for vacations. While I read all genre of books, Kurt enjoys character series by writers such as Clive Cussler and Tom Clancy. Since his retirement he has become a voracious reader, although it is debatable as to who reads more books in a year.

Kurt began occasionally helping me and could see how much working at the Library was very fulfilling for me. My mother started helping me, which creates wonderful mother-daughter quality time together. The job can be overwhelming at times. Once I told Kurt that "if I were getting paid to do this job, I'd quit". All in jest, but it does show the commitment of the volunteers at the Library.

Lavonda Keel asked Kurt to join the Library Foundation Board a couple of years ago. His background as a tax accountant is why various charitable organizations have asked him to be on their boards. He was the Treasurer of the Foundation and is now its President. The support of the Mountain Brook community to the O'Neal Library is amazing and will help the Foundation to continue its support of special library projects.

Ginger & Kurt Hopper

COMING THIS SUMMER!

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Horror Fiction Comes to O'Neal Library

On Saturday March 5th, O'Neal Library launched its first ***Under the Mountain*** author event featuring Stephen Graham Jones. ***Under the Mountain*** (UTM) is a new series of programming for fans of the horror genre, created by circulation librarian Anthony Vacca. "For a long-lasting and far-reaching genre, horror is one that is often most dismissed...We want to excite fans, but it's as important to welcome those who think the genre has nothing for them," says Vacca.

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Award winning author, Stephen Graham Jones, has been on the New York Times Bestseller list more than 25 times. Jones charmed the audience with readings of never-before-shared short stories and flash fiction as guests gripped their seats in anticipation and delight. Though Jones' novels are described as "gory and raw," his personality was warm and engaging. He did not disappoint, as fans enjoyed one-on-one time with him during the book signing portion of the program.

Library staff were delighted to see one of their favorite programs return and with such a nice turnout. One patron commented the amazing event as well. An absolutely splendid Saturday evening! So many great stories and lots of laughter, It was just what I needed." Thanks to the support of the Mountain Brook Library Foundation, more programs like this can be expected, so be sure to check out the O'Neal Library calendar for future UTM and other author events!

How does the Mountain Brook Library Foundation support O'Neal Library?

The Mountain Brook Library Foundation has partnered with O'Neal Library to provide world class services to the Mountain Brook community since its inception in 1993. Assisting with funding for special programs and projects such as author events, digital collections, and state of the art technology, the Foundation is vital to the Library's mission to provide quality library and informational services for all the people of our community. Thanks to the gifts from generous donors, the Mountain Brook Library Foundation will continue to invest in life-long learning resources for the current and next generation of Mountain Brook residents.

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For Information about the Mountain Brook Library Foundation,
contact Lindsy Gardner at (205) 445-1192 or lgardner@oneallibrary.org

For Information about donations,
contact Pamela Rosser at (205) 445-1155 or prosser@oneallibrary.org

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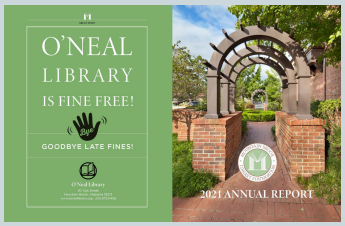

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